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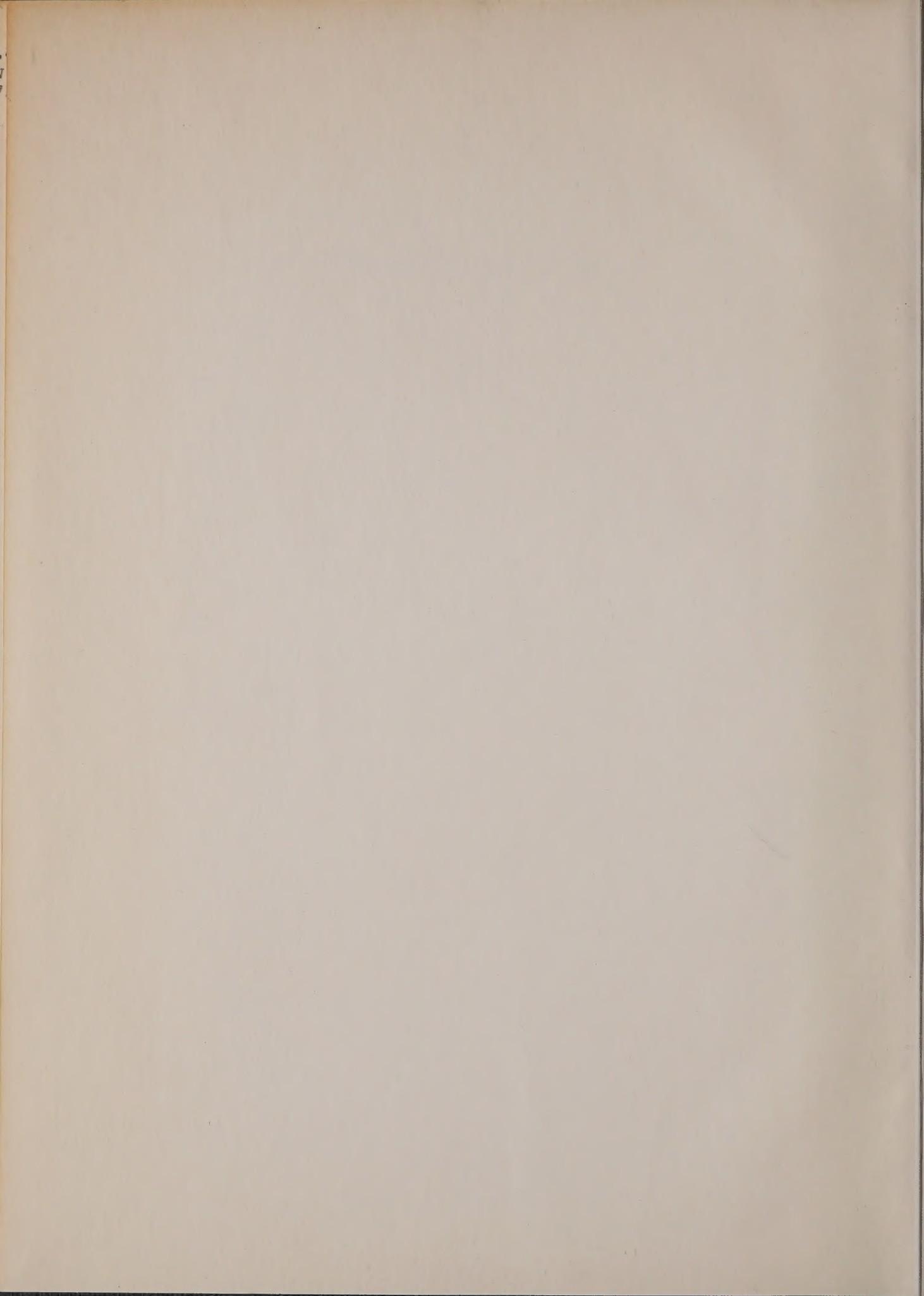
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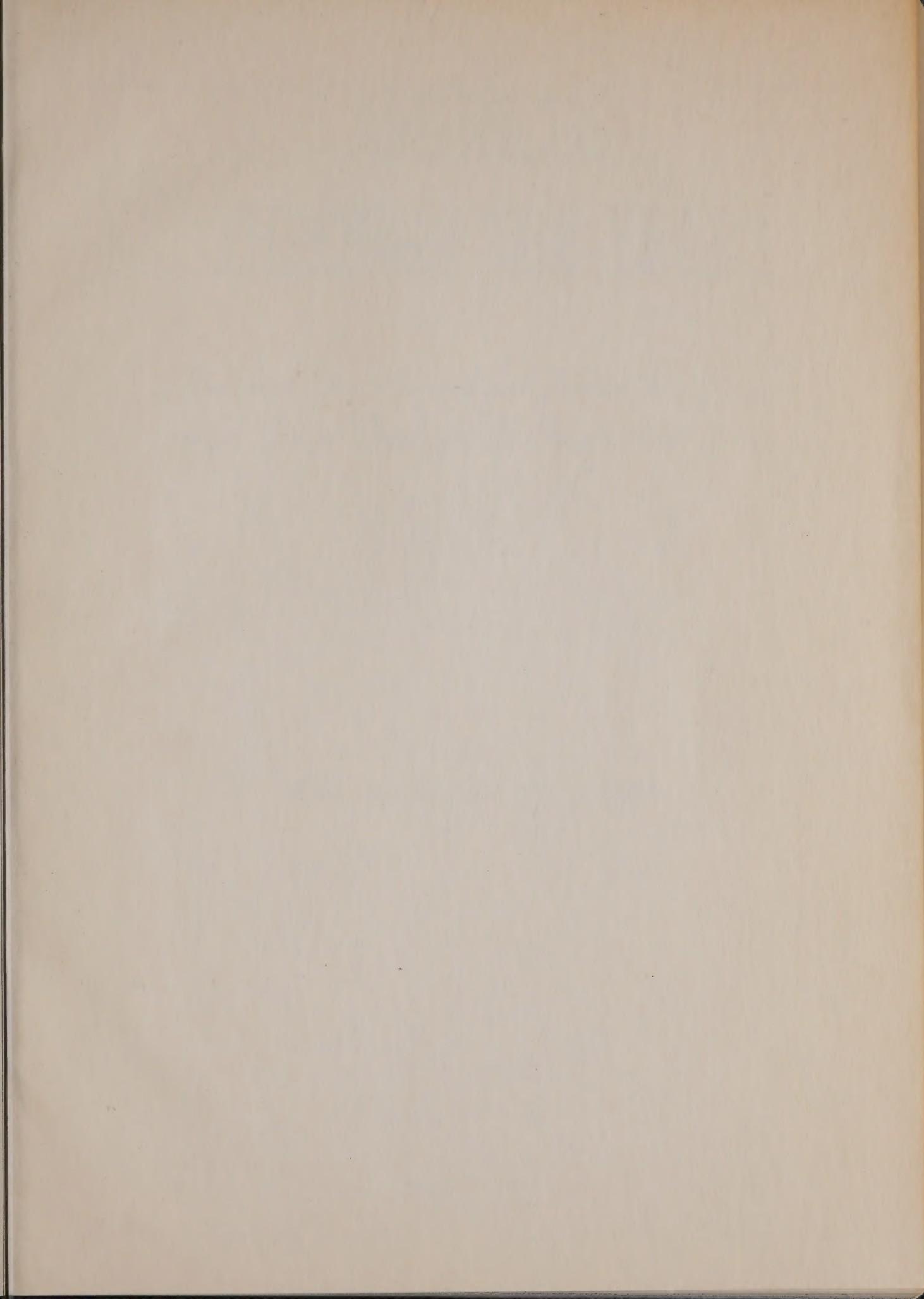
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AMERICUS

THROUGH THE YEARS

*The First One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years
of A Georgia Town and Its People, 1831-1956*

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF MARTINSVILLE
AND COUNCIL

By

WILLIAM BAILEY WILLIFORD

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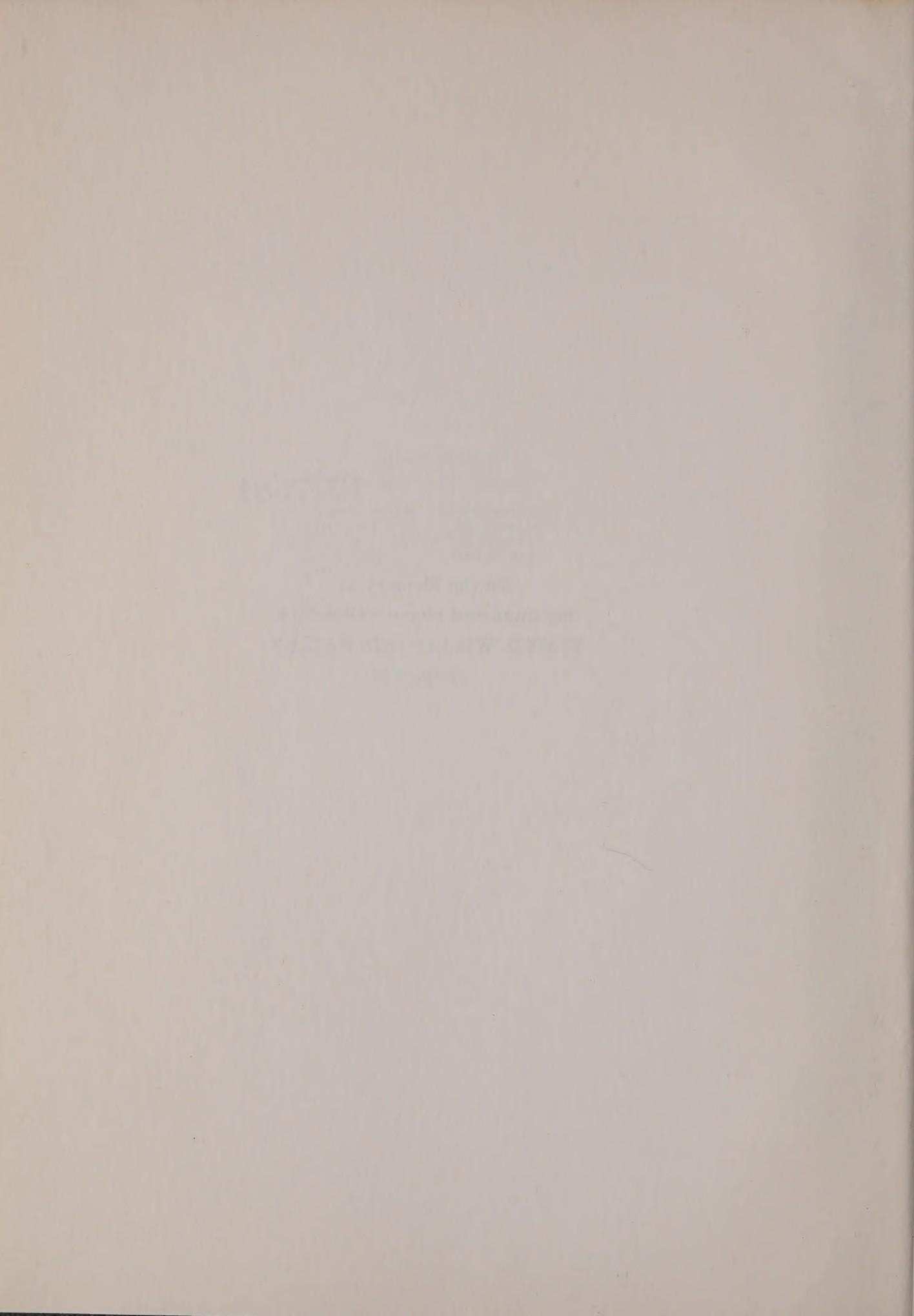
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To the Memory of
my aunt and step-grandmother
FLOYD WILLIFORD BAILEY
1878-1946



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FOREWORD

This book is the result of a life-long affection for - and an abiding interest in the fortunes of - the tree-shaded town in which I spent my boyhood. It was written so that future generations might become acquainted with the early history of Americus and know something about the stalwart men and women who made it what it is today. The fortunes of life have removed me from the orbit of "The Garden Spot of Dixie," thus rendering me unable to make the contribution that once I might have expected to make to the scene of my early years. It is my hope that this volume will in small measure serve to compensate for that deficiency.

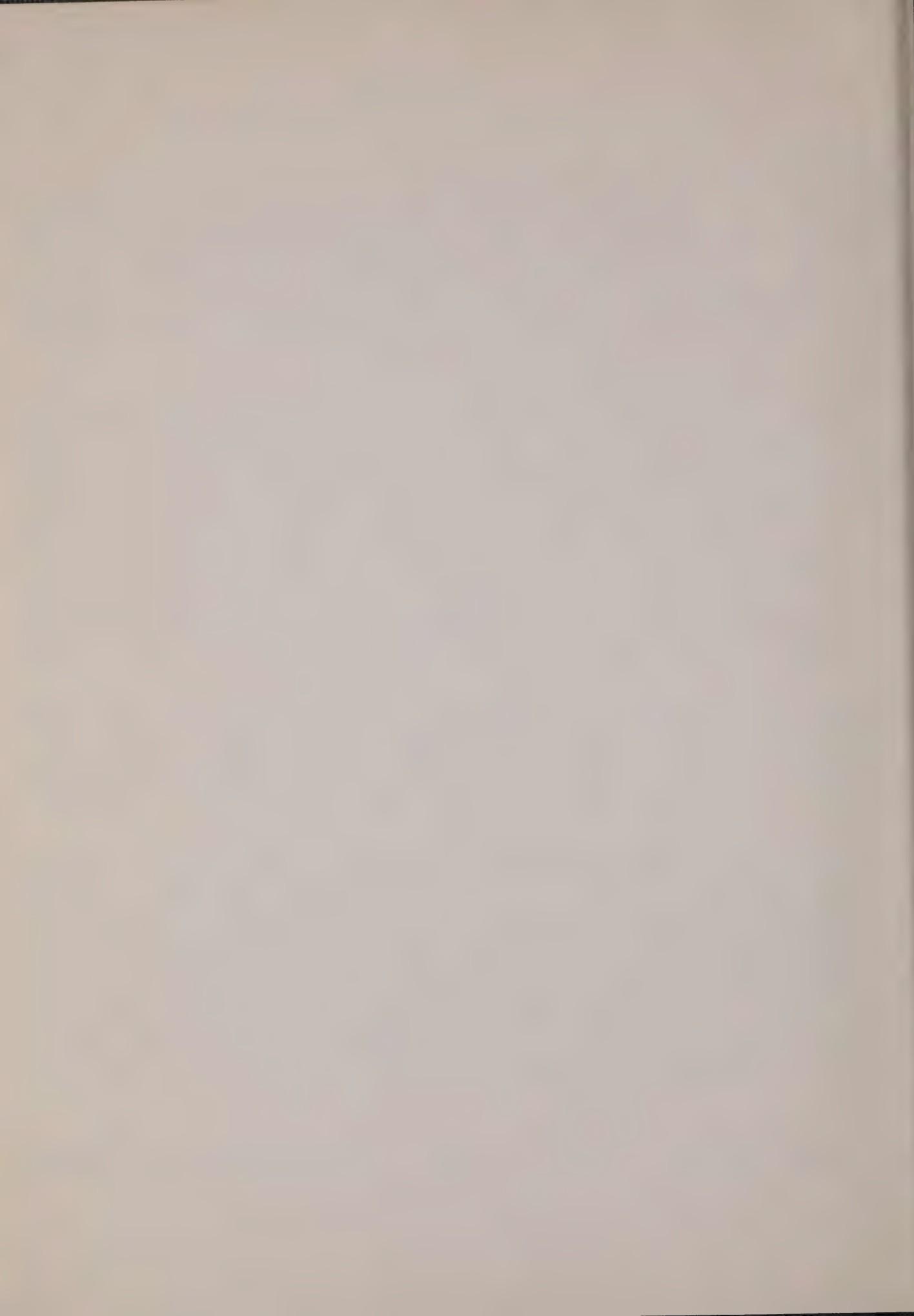
The manuscript of this history was originally accepted for publication by the University of Georgia Press, with the understanding that a portion of the production costs would be guaranteed by interested persons or groups in Americus. After more than three years had elapsed and such support was not forthcoming, it appeared that the project would never reach fruition. At that point I reluctantly decided that although it would not be possible to produce the type of hard-back book originally planned, the important thing was to publish the manuscript in some form so that the recorded history of Americus would be preserved and would be available to interested persons. The decision resulted in the present limited edition, whose production cost, relatively speaking, was far greater than the edition planned by the University of Georgia Press. I hesitated to produce an edition which is at once expensive and of second-rate quality, but I realized that individuals wishing to do so can have their copies bound at nominal cost.

In every work of this type there must of necessity be omissions, both of events and of persons. Within the limitations imposed by space and by distance, I have included what I consider to be the highlights of Americus first century and a quarter. Every statement has been double-checked for factual correctness, but still there remains the very human propensity for an occasional error. For such I beg the reader's indulgence.

I am indebted to so many persons, both living and dead, for their inspiration, encouragement and assistance that it is impossible for me to list them here. However, I should like to offer especial thanks to William F. Bailey, of Macon, for his invaluable assistance, and to personnel of the following public and private facilities for their unfailing cooperation in providing many and varied reference materials: Atlanta Historical Society, Atlanta Public Library, Emory University Library, Georgia State Library, State Department of Archives and History, all in Atlanta; Ilan Dunlap Little Library at the University of Georgia, in Athens; Savannah Public Library, Savannah, and Washington Memorial Library, in Macon. To these and all other persons who so graciously assisted when asked to do so, I tender my grateful and sincere appreciation.

Atlanta, Georgia
April 1, 1960

WILLIAM BAILEY WILLIFORD



*Dear is the boyhood spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.*

—Byron

Chapter I
THE LAND OF "AU MUCKALEE"
(1826 - 1831)

On a fateful day in 1825, representatives of the United States Government met with General William McIntosh, chief of the Lower Coweta or Creek Indians, at the Varner House at Indian Springs, Georgia. There the parties entered into a treaty by which the Greeks agreed to give the United States possession of a vast territory embracing millions of acres, in return for which they received Western territory of equal extent and approximately five million dollars in cash. Thus did Georgia acquire title to fertile and heavily timbered lands in an almost virgin state. General McIntosh, the brilliant half-breed chieftan, was accused by his own people of betraying them in the deal and shortly met death at their hands.¹

Georgia lost no time in seeing that the Greeks vacated their happy hunting ground. Under the provisions of an act of the General Assembly in 1825, the portion of this territory lying between the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers was divided into the counties of Lee, Muscogee, Troup, Carroll and Coweta. Almost before the Indians' camp fires were cold, white settlers moved into the new counties in droves.²

In 1831 a further division of the territory was made when the General Assembly created a new county out of the northernmost portion of Lee. It was named Sumter in honor of General Thomas Sumter, famed "Game Cock of Carolina," who was still living near Bradford Springs, South Carolina, at the age of ninety-seven years. A native of Hanover County, Virginia, he was the last surviving American-born general officer of the Revolutionary War.³

Sumter County contains 534 square miles, or 341,760 acres. Today it is bounded by Schley and Macon counties on the north, Crisp and Dooly counties on the east, Lee and Terrell counties on the south, and Webster county on the west. The Flint River forms its eastern boundary. The streams in the county are the Muckalee, the Muckaloochee and the Kinchafoonee Creeks. There are twenty-seven types of soil in the county, chiefly of the tertiary formation - a gray, sandy loam with frequent red outcroppings. The water is mainly freestone, although some is limestone.⁴ Situated 350 feet above sea level in an area of gently sloping hills, Sumter benefits somewhat from refreshing breezes from the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Gulf of Mexico to the south. The summers are long and rather hot, while the winters are short and increasingly mild.⁵

At the time of its creation, the county was covered almost entirely by forests of long-leaf and short-leaf pine, oak and many other varieties of trees. The forests and swamps abounded in deer, turkeys, quail, foxes, opossum and rabbits, while the creeks and small streams were plenteously stocked with many varieties of fish.⁶

An occasional white settler had ventured into the area when it was still a part of the Creek Nation, but few cared to risk the possibility of being scalped by the resentful red men. Following the creation of Lee County in 1826, several family groups established themselves in the verdant forests. The

first real migrations did not begin, however, until after Sumter came into being in 1831. That was the signal for at first dozens and soon hundreds of persons to move in and begin the task of clearing trees and undergrowth from the rich earth. Within a short time garden patches and farms began to dot many sections of the new county. These forerunners of the great plantations of a later era spelled the beginning of the end of Sumter's primeval forests.

The first settlers came on horseback, in covered wagons and ox carts, and on foot. They arrived with few possessions beyond a bed, a stool, cooking utensils, a spinning wheel, a rifle, a cow, a horse, and a few rude farming implements. Frequently they had little or no food, so they shot wild animals and bartered with the few remaining Indians for corn and bees. Their first homes were tents; later they moved into hastily-constructed one-room log cabins.⁷

Word of the opportunities afforded by the new county spread rapidly. Soon greater numbers of farmers and a few gentlemen planters arrived from their exhausted lands in eastern Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia. Some brought slaves with them; nearly all arrived with a boundless energy and industry.⁸ Most of them were middle-class native-born Americans of Anglo-Saxon Stock. Some from the upper class brought into the crude new county wealth, breeding and education, but generally that type of settler arrived at a later date.

The original settlers of Sumter County were Martin W. Mims, W. Mims, Jacob Little, W. Brady, Edmund Neen, Jared Tomlinson, Thomas Riggins, Isam West, John Mann, A. Wheeler, R. Salter, W. Hubert, W. W. Barlow, E. Cottle, D. Justice, W. Pincher, M. Murphy, W. B. Smith, and M. J. Morgan.⁹

Their ranks were swelled rapidly by the arrival of other intrepid souls who sought new horizons and new opportunities. As these pioneers went about the business of establishing homes and clearing the land, they had the assistance of their fellows. Several miles separated most families from their nearest neighbors, but that served only to make them more neighborly when a cabin was to be raised or a piece of land cleared. While the men went about the serious business of earning a livelihood, the women spun, preserved, baked and sewed.

In the course of even one season there were unforeseen situations with which these hardy folk had to cope. Occasionally one of the Indian squatters would give trouble, and always there was the threat of prowling foxes. Sickness came, and death, but with the eternal resurgence of Nature, there also was new life.

The first child born in Sumter, "excepting Negroes and Indians not taxed," was Ben Wheeler.¹⁰

Shortly after the creation of the county, Avery Wheeler, Jacob Cobb and Richard Salter were appointed to select a site for the seat of government.

They selected the southwest corner of Land Lot 156 in the Twenty-Seventh District. Almost immediately they began to lay out the new town.¹¹

The people of Sumter engaged in lively discussions on the subject of an appropriate name for the county seat. To give everyone a chance at naming it, the men who had chosen the site suggested that the inhabitants write their choices on pieces of paper and put them into a hat. The honor of drawing the piece of paper which would name the town fell to Isaac McCrary. ¹²

The slip of paper he withdrew from the hat bore the word Americus.¹³

Thus the new town was named in honor of the Western Hemisphere which, in turn, had been named for the Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci.¹⁴ Variations of the name were common among the aborigines of North, Central and South America.¹⁵ The Creeks said it meant "safety from the elements in fury" and they said it was peculiarly appropriate for the new town because the location made it immune to cyclones and floods.¹⁶

The settlers considered the name to be appropriate for another reason. Some of the early leaders - Wright Brady, Richard Salter, Jacob Cobb, Avery Wheeler and others - were so high-spirited that they were called "merry cusses."¹⁷ Thus each of them was said to be A-Meri-Cus.

The site of Americus, a few miles west of Cheehaw Village,¹⁸ was so favorable for the production of maize that it long was the center of the granary of the Creek Nation. In cultivating the grain, the Indians usually bored a hole in the earth about fifteen inches deep, dropped in a fish for fertilizer, and then placed a grain of corn on the fish.¹⁹

The town was located on the banks of Au Muckalee Creek. This beautiful name was corrupted by the whites into Muckalee. The meaning of the word is "pour upon me," the creek taking its name from a spring about ten miles from the town.²⁰

A TOWN AND ITS SETTLERS

(1832 - 1839)

The business of laying out the town proceeded rapidly. The founding fathers envisioned a central square around which would be located the house of government, business establishments and the residences of future inhabitants. The terrain was ideally suited for such an arrangement, as the site chosen for the town was a level tract slightly elevated above the surrounding countryside.

As soon as the necessary trees were felled and the underbrush cleared away, streets were defined and laid out for several hundred feet beyond the central square. It was decided to name them as follows: the one on the south side of the square Lamar for Mirabeau Lamar, a native Georgian who was to become the second president of the Republic of Texas; the one on the west side Jackson for Andrew Jackson, President of the United States; the one on the north side Forsyth for John Forsyth, last governor of Georgia; and the one on the east side Troup for Georgia's incumbent governor, George Troup.¹

No sooner was the square laid off than Wright Brady arrived with his fortune in the wheelbarrow he pushed before him. It contained but three items: a pair of shoes, a tent and a keg of whiskey. He erected the tent on the edge of the quagmire that was the square. Bustling with energy and enterprise, Brady soon built a house of skinned poles on the northeast corner, and there in Americus' first house he sold his whiskey by the drink to the first thirsty residents.²

Brady was barely established before he was joined by Green M. Wheeler, a stalwart and kindly man in his early twenties.³ These were the village's first residents, men whose character and sagacity were to leave a lasting imprint upon the lives and fortunes of Americus and its settlers.

An election for county commissioners resulted in John J. Britt, Daniel H. Little, Robert Savage, Richard Salter, and Benjamin Strong being chosen for the posts. Their functions were to act as commissioners of roads and revenues, as judges of the inferior court and for ordinary purposes in the administration of estates.⁴

Early in the next year, 1834, the commissioners decided the county needed a court house. There was an abundance of logs available, but they decided a frame house would be more appropriate than one made of logs. John J. Britt agreed to establish a saw mill and supply the necessary lumber. He selected a site some three miles from the village and employed Jesse Harris, an experienced mill man. Together they turned out the lumber for the court house and, eventually, lumber for most of the first private houses.⁵

The commissioners employed Thomas Gardner to build a combination jail and temple of justice on the southeast corner of the square. It was completed in time for the fall term of the Superior Court, which convened in September, 1834. The first clerk of the court was Jacob Cobb, who served

AMERICUS THROUGH THE YEARS

from January 1, 1832, until his death on March 12, 1843. Louis Bruner was the first ordinary.⁶

County records reveal that the first marriage license was issued to Issac Ramsey and Sarah A. May on October 17, 1832.⁷ The first deed was recorded on May 2, 1832; it transferred Lee County property from Nathan Towell of Leon, Territory of Florida, to William Solomon of Twiggs County.⁸ The first will recorded was that of Reuben Tucker, on May 7, 1836.⁹

The first white child born in Americus was Robert E. Cobb, who arrived late in the year 1832.¹⁰

On January 15, 1833, the Federal Government established a post office at Americus. Lemon C. Morgan was the first postmaster.¹¹

The first post office in Sumter County was at Pineville, which also had the county's first school and first hotel. This thriving village was located twelve miles east of Americus near the Flint River.¹² It owed its existence to a man named Horton who arrived on the site and, exercising squatter's rights, opened a dry goods and grocery store. Business was good and soon the store was the center of a small community. A school was started, with Jacob W. Cobb as teacher. As Pineville flourished, another store was opened by Isaac Wilkes, a carriage and blacksmith shop was operated by John Griswold, a man named Foxhal opened a tailor shop, and Doctors Bagley and Gregory arrived. Soon a high school was opened with Fred Paulhill as principal, and to it the wealthy planters up and down the river sent their sons and daughters.¹³

The decline of Pineville began about 1835 when Martin G. Miller and Royal Jenkins laid off a new town two miles east on the bank of the river. The new town was named Danville and almost immediately it became the source of goods and supplies for Americus, because of its proximity to river traffic. Danville flourished for a few years, during which time it acquired a Masonic hall, a church, a carriage shop, a blacksmith shop, a bakery and several stores. The bakery was owned by John and Clara Newsen, two free persons of color and considerable means, who also took boarders. The end of Danville came as a result of a joint enterprise with Drayton, its rival across the river in Dooly County. Citizens of the two villages formed a subscription stock company to finance a steamboat to take their cotton to Appalachicola. This "nice little boat," The Magnolia, foundered on her second trip and her owners gave up in despair. Subsequently, the site of Danville was included in the farm holdings of Cullen S. S. Horne.¹⁴

Early on the night of November 13, 1833, the people of Sumter County were startled to see stars falling "like snowflakes and fireballs darting back and forth in the heavens like children at play."¹⁵ The awe-inspiring display of heavenly fireworks, instead of exciting admiration, brought most of the settlers to their knees in fear and terror. Many thought the world was coming to a spectacular end.

As Americus assumed the characteristics of a permanent settlement, new arrivals swelled its population. The county, too, was attracting an increas-

ingly large number of sturdy farmers and wealthy planters. Many of the latter were middle Georgia men who established new holdings in Sumter under the supervision of overseers, while they themselves remained at home.

Settlers of this period who had their own log cabin were considered to be in easy circumstances. The wealthier class built double pen log houses which had large halls, detached kitchens and wide piazzas. 16

The possibility of Indian attacks was a constant threat to the rural populace during the red man's hunting excursions. When such an attack was feared, whole families would sleep in their cow pens. Cattle could scent an Indian almost a mile distant, at which time they would stampede in the opposite direction. 17

Americus was barely a tangible reality before Sumter's leaders began to plan for the education of their children. The result was three Old Field Schools which were established in the county by joint action of patrons and teachers, and conducted without supervision from either the county or the state. In these elementary institutions boys and girls recited the "three R's" from morning until dusk. There were few textbooks, and good instruction was principally a matter of grooming the pupils to make a good impression at the yearly "exhibition." 18

In 1837 the General Assembly adopted a plan sponsored by Alexander H. Stephens which provided schools for all white children in the state and free textbooks for the needy. The legislators, however, becoming alarmed at the expense involved and at the stigma of charity attached to tax-paid education, repealed the Act in 1840. 19

Americus took a step in 1833 that was unusually progressive for so new a town. It incorporated the Sumter County Academy for the secondary education of its young people. The following gentlemen were named Trustees: John J. Britt, Joseph Mims, Robert Savage, James Glass, William S. Horton, Thomas Johnston and Daniel H. Little. New trustees appointed in 1835 were William Pegg, Mark M. Brown, John T. McCrary, Jesse Harris and Thomas Gardner. 20

Religion played an important role in the life of both the county and the village from the very earliest days. Beginning late in 1832, a Methodist circuit rider by the name of Dunwoody made regular stops at Americus. Services were held alternately in a private home and in a log building which served as a temporary courthouse. 21 In 1834 William Choice was named presiding elder of the St. Mary's District, which extended from Americus to Jacksonville. 22

In 1835 the Reverend Mr. Edwards arrived as a circuit rider and found some two hundred persons of the Methodist persuasion in Sumter County. 24 By then services were being held in a simple wooden structure on Ashby Street, across from the present Negro cemetery. The building was used jointly 25 with a small group of Baptists.

The years 1837-38 were years of great commercial disasters. The price

of cotton was down and many fortunes were lost, yet religion prospered numerically and financially. It was a great period for revivals. Georgia Methodists raised more money for missions than ever before and sent seven thousand dollars to the relief of their brethren in Charleston, whose churches had been burned. 26

With every new month there were indications of growth in Americus. On the north side of the public square was erected one of the finest houses to date, an edifice boasting of a gable end roof. 27 By 1836 there were three different religious groups: Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist. The number of private dwellings had increased to sixty. 28

From the time of Sumter's creation there had been isolated instances of difficulties with the Indians. In 1836 there erupted a full-scale war into which the little band of settlers at Americus was precipitated forthwith.

The trouble began with an uprising of the Seminoles in Florida against their famous chief, Osceola. The Upper Creeks decided this was their opportunity to strike another blow at Georgia. They assembled on the Chattahoochee in large numbers and moved southeast, committing many murders as they advanced. Governor Schley took to the field in person, joining General Winfield Scott, whom the Federal Government had sent to conduct war upon the Seminoles. General Scott moved swiftly into Creek territory and took large numbers of prisoners, who were sent West as fast as necessary arrangements could be made for their transportation.

In May the Greeks moved into Stewart County, destroying the gunboat Georgia, which was anchored on the Chattahoochee, then moving into the village of Roanoke and burning it to ashes as the citizens fled for their lives. A few weeks later they descended upon Dr. William A. Sheppard's plantation, and in the ensuing battle there were many casualties on both sides. The Greeks continued south to the Chickasawhatchee Swamp in Baker County in their efforts to reach Florida. Most of them were either killed or captured as they fought in the eerie vastness of the swamp. 29

To meet the very real danger of an attack upon Americus, Isaac McCrary organized a company of men with himself as captain. 30 They hurriedly constructed a combination fort and lookout post which was called Fort McCrary. 31 When it appeared that the main body of Greeks was passing to the west of the village, the gallant little company went to the assistance of General Scott's forces in Stewart County.

As the Indian problem subsided permanently, rumblings of another sort were heard. In the North there came into being an Abolitionist movement under the leadership of William Lloyd Garrison, a radical agitator for the immediate freeing of slaves. He advocated secession from the Union because the Constitution upheld slavery, and caused a split in the ranks of the Anti-Slavery Society. His magazine, The Liberator, printed articles on the subject which inflamed the passions of the slave-owning Cotton States. 32 In 1836 Georgia posted a five hundred dollar reward to whoever should kidnap him "and fetch him within the Cracker jurisdiction to stand charges of inciting the blacks to insurrection." 33

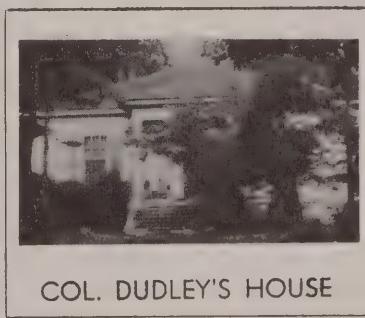
Garrison and his philosophy posed a direct threat to the cotton planters in Georgia. In Sumter County the amount of cotton grown increased tremendously in the county's first decade. By 1838 the countryside was dotted by vast holdings of absentee landlords and by a rapidly-increasing number of farms owned by resident planters. Cotton was sent by wagon from Americus to gins in Hawkinsville, Macon and Columbus, over the winding, dusty stage roads which generally followed old Indian trails. 34

There were several stages operating coach service in middle Georgia at the time. One afforded travel from Columbus to Augusta by way of Talbotton, Macon and Milledgeville for the sum of twelve dollars. Another operated on a thirty-six hour schedule between Macon and Savannah for a fare of eighteen dollars. 35 A third stage operated between Columbus and Saint Mary's via Tallahassee, following the Old Hawthorne Trail, which had been blazed in 1818 by William Hawthorne of Stewart County. The route from Columbus was by way of Buena Vista, Tazwell, Pond Town (now Ellaville), Hamburg, Tyler (now Oglethorpe), across the Flint River at Traveller's Rest (two miles from Montezuma), then to Drayton, Warwick, Pendertown, Bainbridge, Thomasville, Troupville, Milltown, and on to Saint Mary's. 36

In addition to carrying from ten to fifteen passengers, the stage coaches carried and distributed mail. Horses were changed about every twenty miles at inns or tavern which had been erected along the route. Passengers obtained meals there and could, if they chose, obtain a night's lodging. As the stage approached a station, the driver would blow his tin horn so that all would be in readiness when the coach arrived. 37

By the end of 1839 Americus had become home to a steadily increasing number of residents. Among these were Judge Seab Montgomery, Jesse Lee Kimmey, Lovett B. Smith, T. C. Sullivan, John Cowart, L. P. Dorman, Hugh M. D. King, E. R. Brown, Easom Smith, Dr. Albert Rees, A. H. Gibson, Michael Madden, Jesse Harris, Dr. W. M. Hardwick, Dr. Jared Tomlinson, John Kimmey, George Robinson, James Shearn and two brothers-in-law, William H. Crawford and George M. Dudley. 38

Colonel Dudley's wife, Caroline, was a daughter of William Harris Crawford, who in the course of an illustrious career had served as lawyer, state legislator, United States senator, minister to France, secretary of war, secretary of the treasury and judge of the Northern judicial circuit of Georgia. 39 The Dudleys arrived from Lexington on Christmas Eve, 1839, with their children and household effects. They had scarcely entered the village before they witnessed its first murder. John Kimmey killed George Robinson and, in turn, was killed by James Shearin as he crouched under Mr.



Gore's hotel on the southwest corner of the square. So shocked was Colonel Dudley that he considered leaving immediately, but fortunately for Americus, decided to remain and cast his lot with the bumptious new village.

As the 'Thirties passed into history, the streets around the square began to have an appearance of permanence as new stores and houses were erected. The first efforts at beautifying the dusty red streets were made by William Pegg, who kept a hotel on the northeast corner of the square. He set out several dozen flowering locust trees in the square and in front of his hotel. 41 Shortly thereafter Easom Smith set out a group of stripling water oaks on Lamar Street. These trees were to provide the villagers with shade and beauty for more than half a century.

Americus and Sumter County were ready to shed their swaddling clothes and don the raiment of a glorious era.

THE GOLDEN YEARS WHEN COTTON WAS KING

(1840 - 1860)

The year 1840 was welcomed enthusiastically by the residents of Americus and Sumter County. They seemed to feel that great things were in store for them individually and collectively. In truth, however, even the most optimistic of them must have been amazed at the extent of the progress that would be recorded in the space of one decade.

The first official enumeration of persons living in the county was begun toward the middle of 1840. When it was completed on October 27, Census Taker Hugh M. D. King reported a total of 5,743 persons living in Sumter. Of these, 4,103 were free white persons, one was a free person of color, and 1,630 were slaves. The average number of slaves per family head appears to have been less than ten, although roughly one-third of the slave owners had more than that number. Only three men owned more than forty slaves; Smith Davenport, of the 756th District, 62; Issac Chalson, of the 884th District, 46, and McGibbon F. Albritton, of the 745th District, 41. 1

Beginning in 1837, the North had been ravaged by a fearful economic panic. Its effects were delayed in reaching the South, but late in 1840 the first ripples were felt in the cotton states. Gathering momentum, the panic rapidly spread economic chaos. By 1842 the farmers of Sumter, who in 1837 had sold their cotton for thirty-seven cents per pound, were compelled to sell it for three and four cents. To add to their woes, the currency in which they were paid was frequently worthless by the time they reached home from the markets. 2

Nearly every farmer and businessman was caught with debts that had been contracted at inflated prices. As the situation worsened, many lost their property as mortgages were foreclosed. Others, facing ruin, desperately took matters into their own hands. On the day before several farms and their hard-bought equipment were to be sold on the courthouse steps, Sheriff Isaac McCrary was kidnapped and held in Muckalee swamp until after sale hours. That night the courthouse was rifled of its records, which were taken into the woods and burned.3

In those days there was no bridge over Muckalee Creek. Women and girls coming from the west for the purpose of trading would leave their wagons on the west side of the creek, walk four hundred yards through a dense swamp, then remove their shoes and stockings before wading across the creek.4

Near the creek was a place known as "North Carolina," where the young blades from Americus would go to dance with their girls. The dances of the day were the Virginia reels, better known as breakdowns. Dancing was of far more importance in the lives of the people of 1840 than it is today. A man's social reputation depended almost entirely upon his grace and agility on the dance floor. "North Carolina," affording one of the best puncheon floors in the country, was widely known as the social center of the area. The dress of the most elegantly garbed young men at these affairs cost about fifteen dollars, although one particular dandy added to his expense by wearing ruffled

shirts made of thread cambric that cost six dollars a yard. He had them starched with unsifted corn meal, and the resulting ruffles were said to make him look "like a lady's Grecian bend." 5

By the fall of 1843, Americus had a population estimated at between 250 and 300 persons, "including whites and blacks." There was a union Sunday school conducted by the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians under the superintendency of Colonel G. M. Dudley. The three denominations held their services in the Baptist Church, which was the only church in the village. 6

In 1845 the Methodists erected a simple frame building on Church Street, the site being where the alley to the rear of the present education building enters the grounds. There were about fifteen Americus families affiliated with the church, plus some others residing in the county. The official board of the church named J. J. Granberry to be the first superintendent of the Sunday School, which met for the first time on October 31, 1847. Some of the early teachers were Mrs. E. M. Gibson, Mr. and Mrs. Adams, A. Robinson, Mary B. Brown, William P. Hames, Thomas C. Sullivan and Walter T. Davenport.

The Presbyterians claim the distinction of being the first congregation to be organized in Americus. The church was organized on June 19, 1842, but several years elapsed before a frame structure was erected on East Lamar Street. The organizers of the church were Colonel and Mrs. George M. Dudley, Mr. and Mrs. H. K. McKay, Eleanor Gibson, Mary McKay, William J. Patterson, Mary Lines and Rebecca Daniel. Church records indicate that the first person to be baptized was N. Macon Dudley, the rite taking place on May 2, 1841, before the church was formally organized. The first full-time pastor was the Reverend I. R. McCarter, who served from November, 1846, to October, 1865. 8

Another religious institution of importance in this period was the Americus Camp Ground. It was incorporated in 1840 with the following trustees: William L. McKee, William P. Hames, John W. Lommy, Quinny Bass, William Pegg and Joseph M. Wyatt. 9

In education as in religion, growth and progress were the order of the day. Farmer's Academy was chartered in 1842 with the following trustees: Frederick J. Green, Wyatt R. Singleton, William M. Wimbush, Joseph A. S. Turner, and Thomas J. Baisden. 10 It was a "manual labor" school designed to assist young men who were willing to work on the academy farm for several hours a day in exchange for a part of their tuition. It was not, however, a trade school. 11

Early in 1847, an Irish schoolmaster named Andrew Leary O'Brien arrived from his academy in Burke County in quest of better health. Liking the appearance of Americus and discovering no male academy in operation, he decided to open a school and remain through the summer. After boarding his family at "Adam A. Robinson's Esq., Hotel & paying high rent," he quit Americus in December to take charge of an academy at Cuthbert. 12

The first schools open to both sexes offered a classical education. These institutions were so successful that wealthy planters soon demanded female

academies in which their daughters could receive an advanced education. In 1842 George White, that peripatetic reviewer of the Georgia scene, was able to report that Americus had both male and female academies. He also noted that there were 279 poor children in the county and that the educational fund for their use totaled \$241. 95. ¹³

GOVERNMENT

From the time of its creation, Sumter County had been represented at the seat of government in Milledgeville by the following senators:

1832-33	- Lovell B. Smith
1834-37	- John W. Cowart
1838-41	- Jared Tomlinson
1842	- James K. Daniel
1843	- Zoro B. Hayslip

Under an Act approved on December 23, 1843, the state was divided into forty-seven senatorial districts. Sumter was made a part of the Fifteenth District, in company with Lee County. This system of representation apparently was not successful, however, for on January 19, 1852, a constitutional amendment provided for a return to the former system of having one senator from each county, chosen biennially by the electors. The senators who represented the Fifteenth District were:

1845	- William H. Crawford
1847	- William A. Maxwell
1849-50	- Jared Tomlinson
1851-52	- Addison E. Hines

Following the return to the original system, Sumter's senators were:

1853-56	- Hugh M. D. King
1857-60	- Robert J. Hill ¹⁴

Representatives in the same periods were:

1832	- John W. Cowart
1833	- John A. Burks
1834	- Kinchen N. Morgan
1835-37	- Issac McCrary
1838	- Thomas C. Sullivan
1839	- Richard McGoldrick, Edmund Pearce
1840	- Hachliah McMath, William H. Crawford
1841	- Absalom Funderburk, James P. Guerry
1842	- John Blount, George R. Harper
1843	- William Mims, Elijah Butts
1845	- Robert C. Jenkins
1847	- John Jackson
1849-50	- William J. Barlow
1851-52	- W. W. Barlow

AMERICUS THROUGH THE YEARS

1853-54	- Andrew J. Williams
1855-56	- W. J. Moore, T. P. Cottle
1857-58	- George R. Harper, R. T. Hames
1859-60	- Adam R. Brown, George R. Harper <u>15</u>

On December 10, 1840, Sumter County was made a part of the newly-created Southwestern judicial circuit, which also included the counties of Lee, Macon, Schley, Stewart and Webster.¹⁶ Previously, since December 26, 1831, it had been a part of the Chattahoochee Circuit, which also included Chattahoochee, Harris, Muscogee, Marion, Talbot and Taylor Counties.¹⁷ The early judges and solicitors general of the Southwestern Circuit were as follows:

<u>Judge</u>	<u>Terms</u>	<u>Sol. Gen.</u>	<u>Terms</u>
William Taylor (res.)	1840-44	Adam R. Robinson	1840-43
Lott Warren (res.)	1844-52	William J. Patterson	1843-47
William Taylor (dec.)	1852-53	William C. Perkins	1847-51
Edwin R. Brown	1853	John N. Lyon	1851-55
William C. Perkins	1853-55	J. W. Evans	1855-59
Alex A. Allen	1856-59	William E. Smith	1859-62 <u>18</u>

Although the General Assembly, in 1831 and 1832, had provided for distribution of the lands remaining in Georgia from the Cherokee Nation,¹⁹ it was many years before the Cherokee Land Lottery came to an end.²⁰ In the interim, Georgians jumped at the chance to get one or more land lots of one hundred sixty acres each. Sumter, being a new county, had fewer participants than the older counties, but even so there was, as ever, considerable interest in getting "something for nothing."²¹

On November 9, 1843, Hawkins B. Nunn succeeded William Mims as postmaster at Americus. The latter had served since August 10, 1838, when Lemon C. Morgan, the first postmaster, had relinquished the office. Mr. Nunn served only until January 9, 1845, at which time Mr. Mims was again appointed and served his full term. Subsequently Easom Smith was appointed on January 27, 1849, and served until the appointment of Benjamin P. Livingston on January 6, 1851. 22

The population of the village and of the county steadily increased. Sumter's population was comprised, in 1846, of 4,926 whites and 2,515 blacks. By 1848 the county reported state tax returns of \$2,619.90 and an average cotton production of between 8,000 and 9,000 bales annually.²³ In June, 1846, Americus boasted of thirty-seven families and a total population of 177 persons. 24

It was decided in 1847 that the courthouse was inadequate, and so the structure was moved to the west side of the public square. On its original site was erected "an elegant and commodious two-story building" sixty feet square. The new edifice was surrounded by a white picket fence, inside of which was erected a platform for the weekly concerts of the Americus Brass Band. 25

SOME PROMINENT CITIZENS

In this period Americus acquired a number of new resident who were destined to play important roles in its affairs.

One of the earliest arrivals was Walter Thomas Davenport, the progenitor of a family which has furnished Americus and the entire state with four generations of useful citizens. He was a native of Halifax County, Virginia, where he was born on December 25, 1817. He arrived in Georgia on horseback early in 1840, settling at Pond Town (now Ellaville) in Schley County. Four years later he moved to Americus and was named colonel of the 86th Regiment, Georgia Militia. On October 8, 1845, he was married to Miss Mary Elizabeth Frederick, daughter of Daniel and Caroline Ann (Rumph) Frederick of Marshallville. 26

Another noteworthy arrival was William B. Guerry, who appeared upon the local scene in 1841. Born in Twiggs County on April 21, 1821, he was the son of James Guerry, farmer, a native of South Carolina. Young William read law under Alfred and Jacob Iverson in Columbus and moved to Americus as soon as he was admitted to the bar. In 1845 he was elected judge of the inferior court and subsequently served as judge of the district court and as county solicitor. His wife, whom he married on January 29, 1846, was the former Miss Sarah Dixon. Two of his brothers, James and Peter, settled in Sumter, while a third brother, Theodore LeGrand, became a prominent citizen of that part of Randolph County which later became Quitman County. 27

One of the most influential men in the entire history of Americus was John Wright Wheatley, who was born in Northumberland County, Virginia, on June 30, 1833, son of John Wheatley, Jr. and the former Miss Harriett Whithington. He arrived in Americus on December 24, 1850, and went to work as a clerk in the general store of his cousin, R. T. McKay, on the corner of Troup and Lamar streets. Subsequently when the business was sold, Wheatley and McKay's brother, H. Kent McKay, opened a drug business. Later Kent McKay withdrew and entered the practice of law. Wheatley then spent several years with his family in Pennsylvania, but eventually returned and became a bookkeeper for Kendrick & Johnson, general merchants. His wife, Mary, was a daughter of Colonel George M. Dudley. 28

Dr. James G. McCrary was a prominent physician in Americus between 1843 and his removal to Macon in 1873. He was born in Twiggs County on May 6, 1820, son of John and Dorothea (Guerry) McCrary. He commenced practice in Americus upon being graduated by Augusta Medical College. At various times he served as alderman and as judge of the inferior court. His wife, Ann, was a daughter of Asbury and Caroline (Bonner) Cowles of Stewart County. Dr. and Mrs. McCrary were the parents of Mrs. Robert F. Poole and the grandparents of Mrs. Annie (Poole) Walker, the latter being for many years a well-known school teacher in Americus. 29

One of the ante-bellum princes of Georgia was Colonel John B. Lamar of Macon. A wealthy and cultured gentleman who had made numerous trips

abroad, he had a beautifully appointed home which was the gathering place for the rich, the distinguished and the interesting people who lived or visited in Georgia. He was one of the first middle Georgians to invest in Sumter's new frontier. In 1846 he journeyed to Americus to buy another large tract of land from the estate of Paul Fitzsimmons, to which he planned to send most of the slaves from his Bibb County plantation. He induced his brother-in-law, Howell Cobb of Athens, to invest in Sumter farm land, and together they ultimately owned more than twenty thousand acres. On an annual crop of five hundred bales of cotton, each weighing four hundred pounds, and the price of cotton being seven cents per pound, the then-princely sum of \$14,000 was realized on Cobb's holdings alone. 30

The richest of Sumter's landowners was Colonel E. C. Huguennin, who owned three large plantations and, at the time of his death circa 1859, almost three hundred slaves. Following his death at his Macon residence, his brothers-in-law, George and John P. Fort, served successively as administrators of his vast estate. The twice-married Colonel was survived by his second wife and her five children. John P. Fort, who spent the fall and winter of 1865 on the Sumter plantations, subsequently married and moved to Albany. 32

In any listing of Americus prominent citizens the name of Timothy Mathews Furlow has an especial lustre. A man of impressive appearance, he had good breeding, considerable wealth and a good education to help him achieve success. He was a native of Morgan County, where he was born on October 1, 1814. Following his graduation from the University of Georgia, he represented Bibb County at sessions of the General Assembly in 1841 and 1842. Shortly thereafter he removed to Americus and engaged in the mercantile business, in partnership with J. J. Granberry. The first brick building in Americus was constructed on "Granberry's Corner" to house their stock of goods. A few years later Mr. Furlow acquired an extensive plantation, the site of which is now the town of DeSoto. At about this time, also, he and his brother, James Furlow, built a magnificent two-story white frame house beyond Americus on the Starkville road. The house was situated in the middle of a large tract of land corresponding roughly to the property now bounded by Lee, College and Furlow streets, and, to the east, by the Seaboard railroad tracks. 33

Among the more colorful and influential of Americus' early citizens was Judge Lott Warren, who arrived in 1844. Born in Burke County on October 30, 1797, he was orphaned in 1809 after the family had moved to Dublin. At the age of fifteen he attended a criminal trial and forthwith determined to become a lawyer. Drafted into military service during the Seminole War, he was elected second lieutenant of the Laurens company and subsequently served as adjutant of the detachment. After disbandment of the outfit he returned to his job as clerk in a Dublin shoe store. He spent six months at a grammar school in 1819 and later read Blackstone's Commentaries while working on an Oconee River flatboat. Young Warren was admitted to the bar in 1821, served in the State legislature in 1824, and in the senate in 1830. He served the Southern judicial circuit as solicitor general (1826-28) and as judge (1831-34). He was twice elected to Congress, first in 1838 and again in 1840. 34

Judge Warren moved to Americus following his election as judge of the Southwestern Circuit in 1843. He was re-elected in 1847, but resigned near the end of his term and moved to Albany, where he died in 1861. An ordained Baptist preacher, Judge Warren was widely known for his eloquence in the pulpit. His wife, whom he married on October 19, 1820, was the former Miss Jane De Saubleaux, daughter of a French gentleman who came to the United States during the Revolution. Their children were Mrs. William Hardwick of Americus and L. P. D. Warren of Albany. 35

Another noteworthy arrival in this period was Willis Alston Hawkins. He was born in Morgan County on January 15, 1825, son of Willis A. and Elizabeth (Boone) Hawkins. After a rudimentary education in the schools of Walton and Morgan Counties, he studied law under Judge Augustus Reese at Madison and was admitted to the bar in 1846. He opened a law office in Starkville and, being poor and having no clients, he also taught school. The young attorney walked fifteen miles to plead his first case, which brought him a note for five dollars. It was never paid. In 1850 he was a delegate from Lee County to the State Convention. In 1855 he was defeated as American Party candidate for Congress by Martin J. Crawford. He moved to Americus in 1852 and in 1854 became the partner of H. Kent McKay. Mr. Hawkins was twice married. His first wife, whom he married on June 7, 1847, was a daughter of Judge Griffin Smith; she died in 1853. In 1854 he married Mary, daughter of John and Ann (Duren) Finn of Augusta. 36

Starkville, the town in which young Willis Hawkins began the practice of law, was located three miles northeast of Leesburg on Muckalee Creek. It was the second town (the first was Webster) to serve as the seat of government for Lee County, which originally included the present counties of Terrell, Randolph, Quitman, Schley, Stewart, Sumter and Webster. The town's population in 1840 was estimated to total two thousand persons, including slaves. From then until the coming of the railroad and the subsequent removal of the courthouse to Leesburg in 1873, all roads led to Starkville. 37

As the leading town of the section, it did an enormous volume of business. At its prime it was noted as a center of wealth, refinement and hospitality, as well as for its outstanding citizens. It was the social, political, intellectual and sporting center of southwest Georgia. Twelve saloons supplied the thirsty with refreshment and four gambling halls provided entertainment far into the wee hours of the night. A Masonic hall, a Baptist church and two good hotels cared for the fraternal and spiritual needs of the inhabitants and for the physical needs of the thousands of visitors who arrived every year. 38

Starkville's decline, begun with the arrival of the "Iron Horse" and the loss of the courthouse, was accomplished by the Civil War and its aftermath. Today its site is marked by a monument commemorating twenty-seven friendly Cheehaw Indians whom Andrew Jackson's soldiers killed by mistake. 39

In 1845 the General Assembly passed a bill creating the Supreme Court of Georgia. The first session was held at Talbotton on January 26, 1846, with Chief Justice Hiram Warner presiding. On the fourth Monday in July of that

year the traveling court convened in the courthouse at Americus.⁴⁰ It was an important day for Americus and southwest Georgia. Lawyers and spectators arrived from miles around, hitching their horses to the rails and trees in front of the courthouse.

The village swelled its collective chest and confidently regarded its growth and potentialities. It had, indeed, made progress. There were three churches, male and female academies, two hotels, four dry goods stores, one drug store, three grocery stores, one tan yard, two blacksmith shops, two boot and shoe shops, and many nice houses lining its major streets. Nine lawyers and six physicians practiced there. The value of town lots was set at \$13, 240, merchants' stocks were worth \$20, 325 and money at interest totaled \$22, 231. ⁴¹

THE MEXICAN WAR

In 1846 the United States became involved in war with Mexico. The War Department requisitioned one regiment of soldiers from Georgia, which was divided into two battalions of five companies each. The Sumter Volunteers, under the command of Captain William H. Crawford, was among the first ten companies to meet the War Department regulations. It proceeded to Columbus, where it was mustered into Federal service. ⁴²

From Columbus the regiment marched to Chehaw, Alabama, where it boarded a train for Montgomery. It continued by steamer to Mobile and thence, aboard the steamer Joseph Day, to Brazos Island near the mouth of the Rio Grande River. Two weeks later it marched to Camp Belknap, a troop concentration center, where it remained several weeks in an effort to restore the health of men weakened by the climate and bad living conditions. From there the regiment proceeded on foot and by boat to Carmargo, Mexico. If "Camp Belknap was a spot fit only for snakes, tarantulas, centipedes, fleas, scorpions and ants," Carmago was even worse. Fifteen thousand men were encamped in tents; the temperature rose daily to 112°, and the water was bad. Thousands were ill and many died. ⁴³

The regiment guarded money trains and supplies at Monterey, marched to Tampico and then to Vera Cruz, but never once did it come within shooting distance of the Mexican Army. It remained comparatively inactive until the service time of the men expired in June of 1847, at which time it returned to Georgia. ⁴⁴

When the Sumter Volunteers returned home the officers and men were received enthusiastically. Local citizens vied with one another to see who could entertain them most royally. The heroes had returned without conquering anything, but to the home folk they were heroes nonetheless.

The Sumter Volunteers had an original membership of eighty-nine men. Joseph A. S. Turner served for a time as captain, while the other officers were First Lieutenant O. C. Horne and Second Lieutenant J. Cottle. The

sergeants were S. P. Woodward, N. N. Thompson and L. T. Taylor; the corporals were H. Edwards, C. H. Cottle, M. S. Thompson and W. A. Elkins. 45

At the Constitutional Convention held in Milledgeville on December 10, 1850, William H. Crawford and Edwin R. Brown, representing Sumter, were among the newly-elected members who produced their credentials and took their seats. These gentlemen, in company with John Williford of Stewart and Willis A. Hawkins of Lee, were to exert a powerful influence in the affairs of southwest Georgia. 46

Earlier that year, on February 23, the General Assembly had approved "An Act to incorporate the Columbus and Greenville Plank and Turnpike Road Company, the Columbus and Lumpkin Plank and Turnpike Road Company, and for other purposes therein named." The major line was proposed to extend from Columbus to Greenville, with two separate branches extending to Cuthbert and Lumpkin. 47

This was good news to Sumter County, for it meant that by driving to Lumpkin one could travel to the cotton and banking centers in Columbus without miring down in the slippery red clay during winter months. The roads were paved with planks, and sturdy covered bridges were constructed over rivers and streams to provide shelter in extreme weather. A gate was placed at all entrances to the roads and admittance was gained only upon payment of a toll.

In 1852 Americus was connected to its neighbors in Marion County through the establishment of a regular back schedule between Americus and Geneva via Buena Vista. The seat of government had been transferred to Buena Vista in 1850 as a result of a disastrous fire which had destroyed the courthouse at Tazewell in 1845. The site of the new courthouse was in the center of one hundred acres of land donated at Pea Ridge by D. N. Burkhalter; it was renamed Buena Vista to honor an important battle of the Mexico war. 48

The Kinchafoonee District of Marion County was one of the wealthiest areas in southwest Georgia. Among its prominent citizens were Martin L. Bivins, Daniel M. Hall, John Herndon, William T. Hollis, John T. Hollis, William Matthews, John L. Matthews and John D. Mathis.49 Descendents of these men, together with persons bearing the names of Burkhalter, Merritt, Davenport, Parker, and Lumpkin, eventually moved from Marion to Americus and became good and useful citizens of their adopted home.

Oglethorpe, a thriving town to the north of Americus, with some fifteen thousand inhabitants, was made the seat of Macon County in 1852. The courthouse was moved from Lanier, a quiet village twenty-five miles from Americus. In 1851 Oglethorpe had had the distinction of producing the first newspaper in that part of the state, Simri Rose's Southwest Georgian. Among early residents who later moved to Americus were Dr. R. C. Black, Major William A. Black, Henry Johnson, A. S. Cutts, Philip Cook and Posy Stanfield. 50

COMING OF THE RAILROAD

By far the most important happening of 1852 for the people of southwest Georgia was the advent of the railroad. The Southwestern Railroad, which had been organized at Macon in 1847, was extended as far as Oglethorpe in 1851.⁵¹ Plans called for the road to be extended to the Chattahoochee River by way of Pond Town and Lumpkin. Citizens of Americus and Sumter County became alarmed at the prospect of not acquiring rail transportation for their cotton. Under the leadership of T. M. Furlow, they raised \$75,000 to buy shares of stock in the railroad, thus assuring a deflection of the route to Americus. Actual costs of the extension amounted to an additional \$125,000. The first cars rolled into the excited village on October 1, 1854.⁵²

Another company, The Georgia and Florida, had been haltingly engaged in building a railroad from Americus southward to Albany. In 1857 the Southwestern absorbed that company, took over its twenty-five miles of road at a cost of \$266,322 in stock, and set itself to finish the job. A branch southwestward from Americus was also provided for in 1857 when stock amounting to \$633,300 was bought by individuals along the proposed route.⁵³ The road from Smithville was in operation a few miles in 1857; it reached Cuthbert in 1859 and the Chattahoochee in 1860.⁵⁴

The Central of Georgia Railway Company, a Savannah enterprise, has for many years operated the Southwestern Railroad under a long-term lease. The association of the two companies has been close for more than one hundred years, beginning in 1855 when President Cuyler of the Central was also made president of the Southwestern following the death of its president.⁵⁵ Together with the Muscogee Railroad, which unites with the Southwestern in Taylor County fifty miles east of Columbus,⁵⁶ this organization has provided a vital link to the centers of commerce for the people of Sumter and adjoining counties.

The first trains were greeted with both elation and terror. The planters and the residents of Americus welcomed the opportunity to move cotton to market more speedily, to have faster and more frequent mail service, and to have more comfortable access to nearby towns. Many of the plantation slaves, however, were terrified of the "Iron Monsters." The trains raced across cotton fields at speeds of almost thirty miles per hour - showering cinders upon onlookers and sounding bells and whistles at every house and at the inevitable groups of curious bystanders. At night they moved more slowly. The first trains had a primitive system for penetrating the nocturnal gloom. Ahead of the engine was a flat car upon which pine knots flared on a bed of sand. This eerie picture soon passed from the scene, however, for it was neither safe nor especially effective. Thereafter, giant candles and whale oil or kerosene lamps were used until the advent of gas lamps.⁵⁷

As the railroad laid tracks across Sumter, more and more enterprising planters, farmers, merchants, and professional men arrived to swell the county's population. By 1854 the population totaled 11,789 persons, while the value of taxable property had risen to a new high of \$6,000,240.91. There were forty churches scattered about the county and, in addition to those in Americus, dry goods stores at Quebec and Bottsford.⁵⁸

In recognition of Americus' steady growth and in an effort to provide for its further expansion, a "Council for the Government of the City" was elected in 1854. The original members, A. W. McKay, T. M. Furlow, and Dr. J. S. Fish, were succeeded the next year by C. J. Malone, G. M. Wheeler, W. T. Davenport and L. P. Dorman. When a charter was granted by the General Assembly and Americus became an incorporated town in 1856, the following officers were named: P. H. Oliver, mayor; Dr. W. J. Barlow, Dr. A. D. Bruce, Dr. J. G. McCrary, William T. Toole and John E. Sullivan, aldermen; G. M. Wheeler, clerk and treasurer, and W. D. McKay, marshal.⁵⁹

FIRST NEWSPAPERS

In more ways than one, 1854 was a momentous year for Americus. In addition to the arrival of the first train and the establishment of a governing body, it witnessed the publication of not one, but two weekly newspapers. The first of these, The Sumter Republican, was founded on February 23 by C. W. Hancock, who was to continue at its helm for many years.⁶⁰ A short time after the people of the town and the county had ~~customed~~ themselves to having a locally-edited sheet, The Southwestern News appeared. It was edited from 1855 to 1860 by William B. Guerry, and subsequently by the Reverend A. A. Robinson.⁶¹

Years later Colonel Hancock interestingly recorded his impressions of Americus in the year in which he established The Republican. The town, he wrote, had five hundred souls and two business houses. The Reverend H. C. Hornady was pastor of the Baptist Church, the Reverend Mr. Williamson was pastor of the Methodist Church, "which could hardly seat two hundred persons," and the Reverend Mr. Carter was pastor of the Presbyterian church.

The Americus Female Institute, continued Colonel Hancock, was under the direction of the Reverend P. A. Strobel, a Lutheran. The schoolhouse was located in a small grove near the residence of Mrs. E. R. Brown (southwest corner of Church and Brown streets). The male school was under the charge of one Mr. Butler, "and the house was located on what is known as Rock Hill." William B. Guerry was also teaching a male school at the time.

Lawyers of the era were Judge E. R. Brown, Colonel G. M. Dudley, Hugh M. Moore, A. A. Robinson, Colonel ~~Willis~~ A. Hawkins, Colonel William J. Patterson, Augustus Gibson, J. R. Worrill and William B. Guerry.

Practicing physicians, concluded Colonel Hancock, were Doctors W. J. Barlow, A. D. Bruce, George F. Cooper, A. D. Winn and J. W. Rowland.⁶²

The "two business houses" (J. J. Granberry & Co. and L. L. Kendrick) were joined later in the year by three newcomers: Crosby, N. McCoy and J. S. Odum. In addition, there were three grocer, Ayers, Meadows & Co., John Pearl, and Moses Speer; three druggists, Davenport & Hajenon, Wheatley & McKay, and Young & Ford, and one variety works, G. W. Smith & Co.⁶³

In 1859, the state senate contained one hundred and thirty-two members. Governor Joseph E. Brown, in his annual message to the General Assembly

on November 3, recommended a reduction of membership ". . . to maintain that calm and dignified decorum . . . that coolness, deliberation and caution, which are indispensable to the proper discharge of the high function of a wise and grave Senate . . ." It was deemed best to create forty-four senatorial districts (Brown suggested only thirty-three), with three counties to each district. Sumter was made a part of the Thirteenth District, along with Schley and Macon. The first senator from this new district was Timothy Mathews Furlow. ⁶⁴

Local elementary school systems had been authorized in 1858 when Governor Brown allocated \$100,000 of annual income from the state-owned Western and Atlantic Railroad to be placed in a public school fund. ⁶⁵ It was late in 1860, however, before Sumter was able to provide free county schools for all classes of citizens.

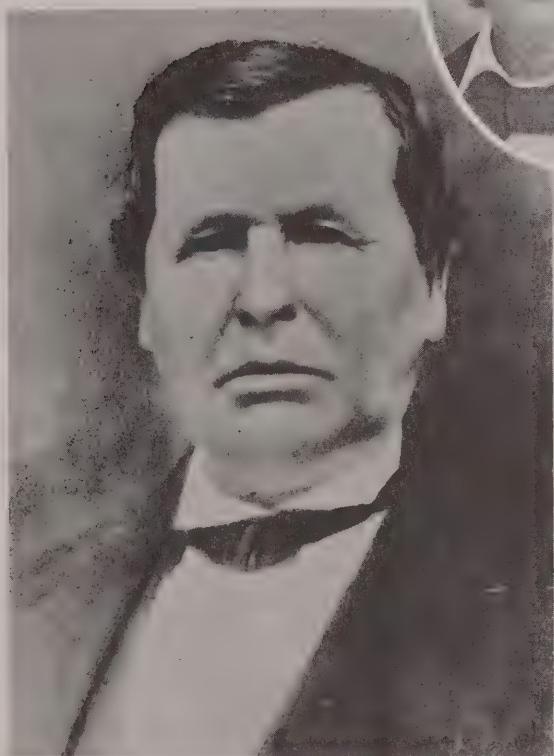
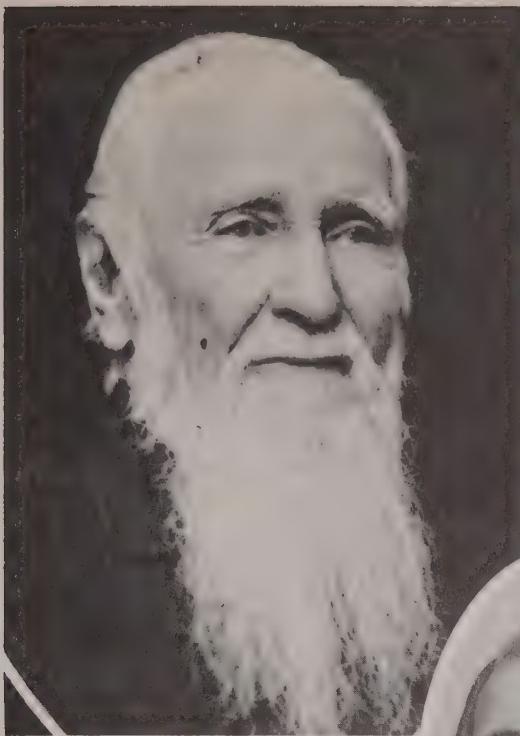
The most important step in the realm of education was made on June 24, 1859, when Furlow Masonic Female College came into being. It was established through the combined efforts of T. M. Furlow, A. S. Cutts and W. A. Hawkins, each of whom contributed one thousand dollars and campaigned vigorously in its behalf, and the Americus Lodge No. 13, F. & A. M. ⁶⁶ The site chosen for the college building was a large parcel of land on the right side of Jackson Street at its southern terminus. Subsequently Malone Street, which connected the Starkville road with the college, was proudly renamed College Street.

The first president of Furlow Masonic Female College was the Reverend Creed Fulton, M. A., of Virginia. Early instructors were W. A. Wilson, E. M. Rylander and W. B. Guerry. Valedictorian of the first graduating class (1860) was Miss Sallie Pickett, who later became Mrs. A. K. Schumpert. ⁶⁷

The Masonic Lodge made provision for many girls to attend the school who were not financially able to do so. To spare these girls embarrassment, all girls attending the college were required to wear sunbonnets and to tie their hair with shoestring instead of with ribbon. All of the girls who completed the course were not permitted to graduate: a number of papas did not think it fitting for a young lady to appear upon a stage. ⁶⁸

In 1854, Americus had been established as a station of the Methodist church, with the Reverend J. R. Littlejohn as pastor. He was succeeded in 1856 by the Reverend J. W. Hinton, D. D. On April 13 of that year, a dedicatory service was held for the new church structure which had been erected on East Church Street (site of the present education building). Dr. Hinton based his dedicatory sermon upon Hebrews 9:5. Fifty years later he was to have the unique distinction of preaching the last sermon in that building, again using as his text Hebrews 9:5. ⁶⁹

The new church was a frame building of quaint architecture. The vestibule had two large octagonal columns, back of which was a deep recess. Broad steps which extended the entire width of the church front led up to the vestibule from a gently sloping lawn. The church was embowered in a grove of old oaks, and a white picket fence surrounded the entire property. ⁷⁰



PIONEER RESIDENTS OF AMERICUS: (top, left) Walter Thomas Davenport, (right) Timothy Mathews Furlow, (lower, left) Thomas Harrold, (right) Henry Rogers Johnson, and (center) Willis Alston Hawkins.

In December, 1856, the annual conference of the Methodist Church convened in Americus and was in session nine days. At that time the Conference included the entire state of Georgia. 71

Dr. Hinton was succeeded as pastor of the church by the Reverend W. J. Scott, A. M., D.D., later to be widely known as the publisher of Scott's Magazine. In recalling his assignment in Americus during the years 1858-60, he later wrote:

"Americus was a delightful station. The church building was large and tasteful, the parsonage one of the best in the entire state. The membership, among whom were C. J. Malone, T. M. Furlow, A. A. Robinson, J. J. Granberry, Dr. W. M. Hardwick, Bivins, A. S. Cutts, W. T. Davenport, Moses Speer, W. H. Crawford, W. A. Hawkins, Jackson, Drs. Hornady, Ford, Clements, and Branham . . . and a female membership such as I have never known surpassed"

"We projected and virtually completed a chapel which the colored membership did me the honor to name 'Scott's Chapel'" 72

As Americus continued to grow and attract more new residents, a small group of Episcopalians decided to band together and establish a mission church. On April 14, 1858, Saint John's was organized at a meeting in the Methodist church, with the Right Reverend Stephen Elliot, first Bishop of Georgia, presiding. There were nine communicants. 73

The year 1859 saw the beginning of a business that was to be a vital force in the economy of Americus and Sumter County and which would remain largely in the control of one family for almost one hundred years. Henry R. Johnson, a wealthy and respected resident of the town, organized a cotton warehouse business to serve the planters of the area. In 1861 he acquired a junior partner by the name of Thomas Harrold and the business was renamed Johnson & Harrold. In 1862 the firm was reorganized as H. R. Johnson & Company, and in 1867 it became Harrold, Johnson & Company. 74

Thomas Harrold was one of a large group of astute business men who, throughout Americus' first sixty years, recognized the possibilities afforded by the fresh young town in the middle of the fabulous cotton kingdom. They envisioned a good new life and the opportunity to make a fortune; most realized the former and a surprisingly large number also acquired the latter. Thomas Harrold was one of these.

He was born in Glen Cove, New York, on June 12, 1814, and died in Americus on November 7, 1887. In 1835 he moved to Macon, Georgia, where he engaged in the cotton and grocery business. From 1848 to 1861, Thomas Harrold lived in New York as junior partner in the wholesale grocery firm of Thos. Wood & Co. In the latter year he moved to Americus and entered into the partnership with Mr. Johnson. Mr. Harrold and his wife, the former Miss Mary Ann Bullock, of Twiggs County and Macon, were the parents of Mary (Mrs. Sampson P. Boone), Uriah, Louisa (Mrs. Henry T. Davenport), William and Maria Harrold. 75

Mr. and Mrs. Harrold and their children were all esteemed citizens of Americus, but Uriah Bullock Harrold was to be the best known and most influential member of the family. A native of Macon, where he was born on February 17, 1839, he was reared and educated in New York. In 1861 he moved to Americus as a junior member of the firm of Johnson & Harrold. On May 28, 1862, he was united in marriage with Miss Mary E. Fogle, daughter of Dr. Jacob Fogle. 76

As Americus neared the end of its third decade, a visitor wrote:

"The town covers a large space, houses scattered, but many of them large and elegant." 77

Among the houses of that era which have been preserved to this day, the finest unquestionably is the magnificent Greek Revival residence of Mrs. Charles Hudson on the northeast corner of Lee and College streets. Presumed to have been built by Willis A. Hawkins, circa 1855, it has been owned successively by Howell Cobb, William A. Greene, John A. Cobb, Dr. W. W. Barlow, S. H. Hawkins, John T. Taylor, Mrs. Annie B. Lee, R. P. Stackhouse, Dr. W. S. Prather and, finally, by the latter's daughter, Mrs. Hudson. 78 For a short time early in the twentieth century it was used by Dr. John I. Darby as a sanatorium. The addition of a sun parlor and a carriage porch served to mar somewhat its architectural purity, but the house remains an impressive symbol of an elegant past.

Another handsome ante-bellum mansion is the white columned residence on the southeast corner of Taylor and Barlow streets, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. King. For some forty years before the present owners acquired it, the house was the residence of Judge and Mrs. Z. A. Littlejohn. Previously it had been owned successively by Mrs. Huldah V. Terrell, Mrs. M. V. Brinson, and Mrs. Clara B. Crisp. 79 Earlier it had been the home of Dr. W. W. Barlow and his young second wife.

The home of the late George M. Dudley, which was situated in the middle of a large tree-shaded lot in the triangle formed by the junction of Spring, Lamar and Dudley streets, was an attractive example of the modified Greek Revival architecture that was so beloved of Southerners before the Civil War.

Another and larger one-story house of this style was built by John W. Brim on the south side of Malone Street, halfway between Jackson Street and the Starkville road (present southeast corner of College Street and Harrold Avenue). Erected in 1855, it was owned successively by Mr. Brim and by Mrs. Elizabeth T. Kerr. The latter sold it in 1861 to Thomas Harrold, who occupied it until his death. In later years it was the residence of his unmarried daughter, Miss Maria Harrold, who died there in 1935. Last owners of the house were Charles B. King, and S. Hawkins Dykes, whose families occupied it jointly until 1940. In that year the charming old home with its high ceilings and spacious piazzas was torn down and a tight little brick house was erected in its place. 80

The oldest house in town is said to be the attractive one-story frame structure situated near the southeast corner of the East Forsyth Street-Prince Street intersection. It



was acquired in 1926 by the late John Barnum, well-known undertaker and one of Americus' most respected Negro citizens, and is still occupied by members of his family. 81

One of the beautiful houses in Americus is the one-story frame residence of the Misses Elizabeth and Martha Cobb, at 505 South Lee Street. The entire block in which it is situated was once the property of Postmaster Benjamin P. Livingston. On January 17, 1855, the tract was acquired from his estate by Charles J. Malone, a wealthy and useful pioneer citizen of Americus. Colonel Malone went to Oglethorpe following a terrible yellow fever epidemic there and bought the central portion of the present structure. It was moved to Americus and subsequently enlarged. Between 1872 and 1883, the property was owned by Moses Speer and William Hooks and was occupied for a time by the family of Thomas G. Bryan. On March 21, 1883, the northwestern half of the block, containing four acres and the house, was bought by John A. Cobb for the sum of \$2,900. Subsequently the lots to the north and to the south of the house were sold and residences were erected upon them. Upon Captain Cobb's death, the house passed to his eldest daughter, the late Miss Sarah P. Cobb, who maintained it for many years as the official residence for her three sisters and one brother. 82

Life was good for the people of Americus as the year 1860 drew to a close. The price of cotton, always the barometer of economic well-being, was high; business was thriving; enrollment in local schools showed a steady increase; churches were expanding both their properties and their influence in the village, and there was a pleasant round of social activities to promote friendships and to provide gaiety.

This was the peak of a golden age, a time when King Cotton reigned supreme and every planter believed the world to be his for the asking. It was an era of gracious living that was personified by the true aristocrats, men and women who bore the names of Barlow, Cobb, Crawford, Davenport, Dudley, Elam, Furlow, Harrold, Malone, and Speer. It was a time soon to be gone and never to be recaptured. It was the beginning of the end for the Old South.

Chapter IV
YEARS OF THE REBELLION
(1861 - 1865)

As the year 1861 opened, the people of Americus confidently felt that their star was ascending to its zenith. Twelve brief months later they were disquietingly fearful that it had already passed that point. True, the countryside continued to repose under an almost unending blanket of white cotton. True, most of the slaves continued laboriously to pick the fluffy bolls, all the while singing of a better time in the promised land. True, the gentry of the town still dressed elegantly; they rode behind fine horses; they dined well, and they were making more money than ever before. But there was a difference which even the least discerning could sense, vaguely and uneasily.

Relations between the North and the South had become acutely strained in 1860 as the North fanned the flames of Abolitionist agitation. The Southern states advocated an economic embargo of the North, thinking that self-interest would cause the Northern merchants to lessen their insistent demands for abolition. But the hostility between the two sections of the United States was increased by the burning of Fort Moultrie in Charleston Harbor on December 20, 1860.

Howell Cobb, Sumter landowner and occasional Americus resident, was one of the decisive forces of the crucial times. No man in Georgia commanded more respect than he. Possessed of immense wealth, a lucrative law practice and a brilliant mind, he had been congressman, speaker of the House of Representatives, governor of Georgia, and secretary of the Treasury. A man of high principles, he had been an ardent Union man until he came to believe that the North wished to disfranchise the South. When President Lincoln freed the slaves, Howell Cobb was deprived of the ownership, but not the services, of more than one thousand Negroes on his vast plantations.¹

"The hour of Georgia's dishonor within the Union," he thundered, "should be the hour of her independence without the Union!"²

It was decided that a State Convention would be held at Milledgeville on January 19, 1861, for the purpose of deciding whether Georgia should secede from the Union. Seldom has so distinguished a group of men assembled in Georgia.³ To deliberate with this illustrious body, Sumter County sent three of her ablest men: Willis A. Hawkins, Timothy M. Furlow and Henry Davenport. ⁴ They traveled to Milledgeville via train, in company with Marcellus Douglass of Randolph and James A. Fort of Stewart.

The secessionists, under the leadership of Robert Toombs, were in the supremacy, but the anti-secessionists, led by Herschell Johnson, had a strong following. After eloquent speeches from many of the delegates, an ordinance was adopted which said,

"We, the people of the State of Georgia, . . . do declare and ordain That the Union now subsisting between the State of Georgia and other States is hereby dissolved. . . ."⁵

The Convention passed the ordinance of secession with a vote of 208 yeas and 89 nays. All of Sumter's delegates voted affirmatively. 6

As the Colonial flag of Georgia replaced the Stars and Bars, the news was flashed to all parts of the state. There was wild jubilation and confident predictions of the enemy's early downfall. The die was cast.

The government of the Confederate States of America was organized at Montgomery, Alabama, in February and Howell Cobb was chosen president of the Provisional Congress. His fellow Georgians eagerly volunteered to bear arms in defense of the Southern Cause. Volunteer companies were organized and equipped by men of wealth and determination. The 16th Georgia Regiment, under command of Colonel (later Major General) Cobb, was one of the first Georgia units to reach Virginia. Others soon followed.

The men of Americus and Sumter County rallied immediately to the call for volunteer troops. One of the first units to be organized was the Sumter Flying Artillery, under command of Captain A. S. Cutts. Its other officers were H. M. Ross, senior first lieutenant; G. F. Smith, junior first lieutenant, and Samuel Heys, second lieutenant. 7

Captain Cutts was well qualified for his position of leadership. A native of Pulaski County, where he was born on December 4, 1826, he was the son of Major Cutts, a South Carolinian by birth. Young Allen was reared on farms in Houston and Randolph counties. After a common school education, he served three years in the regular Army of the United States, two of them in Mexico. From 1851 to 1854 he was in the mercantile business in Oglethorpe, Georgia, and subsequently followed the same vocation in Americus. His wife, Fannie, whom he married on December 17, 1854, was a daughter of James O. Brown of Monroe County. 8

On July 6, 1861, Captain Cutts and his men left Americus for Richmond, Virginia. The company was mustered into the service of the Confederate States on July 15 as Company A of the 11th Battalion, Georgia Volunteers - thereafter known as Cutts' Artillery. On the twenty-fourth the company reported to Manassas, three days after the bloody first engagement there. In August it was equipped with six guns and in the fall two more were added, making an eight-gun battery of seven six-pounders and one twelve-pound howitzer. The original number of men enlisted was increased from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty. 9

The Americus Volunteer Rifles was the second company to leave Americus for the seat for war. It was redesignated as Company K of the Ninth Battalion, Georgia Volunteers. 10

The Muckalee Guards, commanded by Captain Willis A. Hawkins, was among the ten companies comprising the 12th Georgia Infantry Regiment when it was organized at Richmond on June 26. Other companies were from Bibb, Macon, Marion and Muscogee counties. 11

Another local unit was the Sumter Light Guards, which became a part of the Fourth Georgia Regiment. Commanded by Captain W. L. Johnson, it was

mustered into the Fourth Georgia as Company K at Augusta in April, 1861.¹² The first corporal of the outfit was John M. Shiver, a native of Macon who had recently been foreman of the George W. Surrine & Sons carriage and buggy factory at Americus. ¹³

The Tenth Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, was organized at Camp Stephens, Georgia, on March 17, 1862. Captain John E. Rylander, of Americus, was elected major. The battalion then consisted of these four companies.

Company A, Macon County Guards, Captain J. D. Frederick
 Company B, Worth (County) Rifles, Captain Daniel Henderson
 Company C, Zollicoffer Rifles (Sumter County), Captain B. F. Bell
 Company D, Whittle Guards (Bibb County), Captain W. L. Jones ¹⁴

A fifth company was formed on July 17 and John L. Adderton was elected captain.¹⁵ This outfit had been created originally as the Granberry Guards of Americus. ¹⁶

The pulse of Americus quickened as excitement mounted and the tempo of the war increased. A new bond drew the residents of the village closer together than ever before. As local units departed for the front, the entire community turned out to see them off. The Americus Brass Band led the way from the square to the depot, followed by the smart-stepping volunteer units. Next came wives, mothers, children, fathers and friends - some on foot, some in carriages; some laughing and shouting, others weeping softly. Nearly everyone seemed to be supremely confident that the men would soon be home, still young and handsome, still wearing their dashing new uniforms.

Their confidence and optimism were first shaken in the fall of 1861. As the telegrapher posted casualty lists on a bulletin board outside the depot, they were read with shocked incredulity. The glamour and excitement of war was suddenly displaced by grief and apprehension.

On December 20, Cutts' Artillery reported to General J. E. B. Stuart with four guns. In the ensuing engagement at Dranesville, the company met the enemy in "overwhelming force." Sergeant Major J. D. Harris described it thus:

"In one hour we suffered a loss of one caisson blown up, another demolished, a limber shot down, twenty horses killed, six men killed and fifteen wounded, out of forty cannoniers and drivers at the guns. In this fearful encounter, Captain Cutts rendered himself particularly conspicuous for desperate energy and cool, self-possessed, calculating courage. Lieutenant L. E. Spivey (acting number five), Privates Doolittle, Green and Lingo, and Sergeants Randall and Fletcher deserve special mention for their gallant conduct. Private J. L. Price at this place displayed that coolness and intrepidity which has marked his conduct ever since upon every battle field in which his company has been engaged; his name deserves to figure in the list of Georgia's heroes. Many others of the command behaved very handsomely." ¹⁷

The war caused Americus to lose one of its newest and potentially most useful families. Early in 1860 Judge J. J. Scarborough and his family had

moved from the North with the announced intention of becoming permanent residents. When war came, however, their loyalties decreed that they should leave the rebellious South. The family moved to Saint Paul, Minnesota, where they prospered, promptly and prodigiously. A daughter, Augusta, however, remained in Georgia. She had recently been married to Dr. John D. Wade of Marshallville. 18

A similar situation, albeit reversed, resulted in Americus acquiring one of its most useful citizens. When the war broke out, a Baltimore doctor named Erwin James Eldridge was in Lee County on a visit to a plantation he owned there. He had but recently returned from duty as a surgeon in the Crimean War. 19 Not wishing to pass through the battle zone to get back home, he decided to settle in Americus for the duration of the war. He opened a drug store and soon became one of the village's most respected businessmen. Dr. Eldridge, who was born February 3, 1833 and died March 12, 1902, was three times a bridegroom. By his first wife, Emma, he was the father of Morgan and Arch R. Eldridge, both of whom became prominent citizens of Americus. His second wife was Miss Mary Davis of Maryland, and his third wife was Mrs. Elizabeth (Jarratt) Barlow of Americus. 19

On June 1, 1861, The Southwestern News was acquired by A. B. Seals, former Atlanta newspaperman and author of a popular romance entitled Rockford. The previous editor, the Reverend A. A. Robinson, resigned the pen for the sword by joining the Confederate Army. Under Mr. Seals' editorship the name of the paper was changed to The Americus Weekly Post. Publication was discontinued in 1862. 20

Early in 1862 Americus acquired a new business in the form of a small furniture shop. Although its primary function was the manufacture of furniture for local homes, it also made another widely used product. The owner advertised that, "as there is no way now to get metallic burial cases, we have had several sizes of wood coffins made for the accommodation of those who may be in need of them." 21

In that same year Sumter County witnessed the first local violence resulting from Lincoln's emancipation of the slaves. A Negro man was hanged by an angry mob after he had attempted to induce other ex-slaves to escape with him to the Federal blockade on the Florida coast. A year earlier there had been a serious threat of an insurrection near Bainbridge, when Negroes had collected knives and guns with the suspected intention of killing all of the men, old women and children, and taking the younger women for wives. Such threats as this caused many a patriotic citizen to hesitate before leaving his family and joining the army. 22

The Confederate Congress took cognizance of the need for controlling plantation laborers by passing a law which exempted one owner or overseer for every twenty Negroes on a plantation. The Confederate Army, needing more volunteers for the war, opposed this action with considerable force. As a result, there was a drastic reduction in the number of exempted overseers. 23

Planters now began to worry that their slaves would be overworked or demoralized to such an extent that they would run away. Jame A. Hill of Sumter County wrote to Dr. J. W. Mallet in Macon in regard to one of his Negroes who was working at the Macon Arsenal:

"As Isham has a wife and is very anxious to see her, I should be glad if he could come home immediately. In fact, I fear he may run away if not permitted to do so." 24

As the war continued and news of the battles of Second Manassas and Antietam (or Sharpsburg) filtered down to Americus, the women of the town bestirred themselves. In July, 1862, a group of them met at the Methodist church and raised one hundred dollars to be sent to hospitals in Atlanta. They resolved to contribute an equal sum every month.25 Most of the women in the town busily knitted socks and made shirts to be sent to the hometown soldiers.

COURAGE AND CASUALTIES

In the spring of 1862, Captain Cutts was authorized to increase his command from a company to a battalion. Three more companies were recruited by him in Sumter County. Company A of the Ninth Regiment of Georgia volunteers, having been detached from that regiment as an artillery company, was assigned to the new battalion, thus giving it five companies in all. On account of much sickness and many deaths and discharges, one of the three new companies was disorganized and amalgamated into the remaining two new companies, thereby reducing the battalion to four companies. Captain Cutts was elected major and soon afterwards was promoted to the grade of lieutenant colonel. John Lane, son of General Joseph Lane of Oregon and himself a former West Point undergraduate, was named to succeed Cutts as major. 26

The battalion was engaged in the night attack upon General George B. McClellan's fleet and camp on the James River, in July, 1862; also at Boonsboro, Sharpsburg, and Fredericksburg in the same year, and at Gettysburg in 1863. In addition, Company B participated in the fighting at Fredericksburg on May 2, 1863, and Company C was engaged at Richmond in July, 1862, at Warrenton Springs in November, 1862, at Washington, North Carolina, and at Suffolk in April, 1863. After the battle of Sharpsburg, one of the companies was broken up and the men distributed among the remaining three companies; A and B from Sumter, and C from Wilkes County. 27

At the battle of Boonsboro, Cutts' Battalion and the Jeff Davis Battery (another Georgia outfit) were all of the artillery on the Confederate side. Outnumbered and unsupported, they kept back heavy masses of Yankee infantry during the entire engagement. Yet, in the official report of General D. H. Hill, the commanding general, they were not even mentioned. 28

Meanwhile, Captain John E. Rylander's Tenth Battalion had arrived in

Virginia after six months at Camp Oglethorpe near Macon, where it had been detailed to guard several thousand Federal prisoners awaiting exchange. Arriving at Fredericksburg on December 27, 1862, it was attached to General G. T. Anderson's Brigade, General Hood's Division, Longstreet's Corps.²⁹

On February 17, 1863, while marching from Fredericksburg to Richmond with the rest of the army, the men suffered five days of incredible hardships while exposed to the horrors of a northern Virginia snowstorm. The Tenth Battalion participated in the campaign against Suffolk, and near its close was exchanged for the 59th Georgia Regiment. Upon relief, it was ordered to Fort Powhatan, on the James River, an important position which was held under the most trying circumstances. Two months later, the enemy having apparently matured his plans for attacking the fort by land and by water with vastly superior forces, the battalion fell back to Petersburg. In August it moved into Franklin, where for eight months it protected the surrounding countryside from the hostile incursions of the Yankee forces. ³⁰

The 12th Georgia Infantry Regiment, of which the former Muckalee Guards was Company A, was involved in a number of costly battles. At McDowell, Virginia, on May 8, 1862, ten Sumter men were killed and sixteen others were wounded. The regiment marched 491 miles from May 7 to June 26 in thirty-five marching days. The men averaged fourteen miles per day, in the course of which they fought in six battles and three skirmishes, besides participating in the action at Front Royal on May 30. They did this on half rations, wearing tattered garments and with few men having shoes. ³¹

Company A counted dead and wounded in every engagement. At Cedar Run on August 9, 1862, three men fell; at Second Manassas, August 16 - September 2, five privates died and four others were wounded; at Sharpsburg, September 17, one man was killed and five men were wounded; at Fredericksburg, December 13, one man was killed; at Chancellorsville, May 1 - 10, 1863, two men were sacrificed and four others were injured, and at Gettysburg, July 1 - 3, two men were killed and two injured. In the last engagement, Private J. L. Betts, representing his company, was honored for valor. ³²

THE HOME FRONT

Back in Americus, fifty-two boys and youths had organized a semi-military unit designed to be a home guard. Called "The Dixie Guards," it was captained by Archey Martin. Among the privates were George Kenmore, Sam and William Heys, and six young men named Smith. ³³

The town was plunged into mourning with the arrival of each new casualty list. By the end of 1863, nearly every family had suffered the loss of at least one close relative. The deep black of mourning garb was an all too-familiar sight on the streets and in the churches. As though to fill a deep and suddenly recognized spiritual need, revivals were held at one or more of the churches once or twice a year. ³⁴

The local Episcopalians again endeavored to establish a parish, St. John's

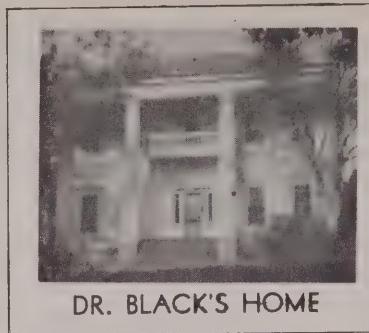
having survived only a short time after its founding. In 1862 a Sunday school was begun in the home of Thomas Harrold and in 1863 an occasional service was held there by the Reverend H. K. Rees, rector of Christ Church in Macon. Bishop Stephen Elliot visited Americus in 1864 and held services in the chapel of Furlow Masonic Female College. He baptized four children, Griffith Morgan Eldridge, Mary Lavinia Harrold, Martha Hester Stephens and Margaret Stephens, and confirmed William Harrold, Ann Augusta Leamon and Harriet Clayton. 35

In 1864 the Reverend Thomas Jefferson Staley, a missionary priest, began to hold monthly services. Calvary Church was formally organized in a service held at the Presbyterian church on Sunday afternoon, August 13. It was admitted into the Diocese of Georgia at the Third Annual Council, which was held in 1865. A small house on the Taylor Street property of Colonel W. A. Maxwell was repaired for use by the rapidly expanding Sunday school (this house, later the residence of Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Bagley, is now owned by their son-in-law, John Wagnon). The ladies of the church formed a sewing society and thereby earned six hundred dollars to be used in the purchase of a lot for the church edifice. In 1866 the first marriage solemnized by an Episcopal clergyman occurred when the Reverend Thomas J. Beard united Miss Mary E. Harrold and Sampson Potts Boone. The first death within the parish was that of Mary Lavinia Harrold on August 19, 1864. 36

Oglethorpe, Americus' neighbor to the north, suffered a devastating blow early in the war. Already dwindling in population because of the extension of the railroad beyond the town and the yellow fever epidemic of the middle 'Fifties, it now reeled under the scourge of smallpox. The dread disease killed thousands of persons. Panic reigned; there were desperate efforts to escape to other areas, but trains and stage coaches passed through the town without stopping. The only "disinfectant" used to combat the disease was onions, a small bunch of which hung from the walls of every house. Hundreds died each day and whole families were buried in one night. Many houses were burned in an effort to stop the spread of smallpox. Others were later moved to nearby towns. 37

Americus alone acquired one hundred houses from Oglethorpe. Several of this number still grace the city's streets, and two are worthy of special mention. One of these houses is the handsome structure at the northwest corner of Taylor and Horne streets which is now owned by Mrs. Wallace Sheffield (nee Ann Walker). It was occupied in early years by Dr. J. B. Hinckle and, later, by Mrs. C. R. Whitley. For some twenty years before Mrs. Sheffield bought it, the stately house was the residence of Herbert Hawkins and his wife, the former Miss Edna Shirley (later Mrs. Arthur C. Rhoades). The second of these houses, also a white frame edifice with great columns adorning its facade, was erected on the property to the north of W. T. Davenport's cottage in Brooklyn Heights. Its first local owner was Dr. Robert Cope Black, who quite possibly had also occupied it in Oglethorpe.

Dr. Black, long a prominent physician, sold the house to his brother, Postmaster William A. Black. The latter, in turn



sold it to his son-in-law, Henry R. Johnson. In more recent years, this house was the residence of Mrs. Russell Speer. 38

In September, 1863, Timothy M. Furlow, announced his candidacy for the governorship. He was opposed by Governor Joseph E. Brown and Joshua Hill. An ardent spokesman for the extreme Confederate faction, Mr. Furlow immediately obtained the indorsement of the influential Southern Recorder at Milledgeville.³⁹ His announcement of his candidacy said, in part:

"My official support should upon every call be given to the Government, when not clearly unconstitutional. This is no time for factious opposition or grudging support to the Administration. If elected Governor, I shall throw no official protection around any citizen, within the embrace of the Conscription Law, and in my appointments my policy shall be to give ... assistance.... to those who have been disabled in the service of the Country."⁴⁰

None of the candidates campaigned actively, relying instead upon published letters and editorial support. The popular sentiment was opposed to changing administrations in the middle of the war, so Governor Brown shattered precedent by winning election to his fourth consecutive term of office. The total vote of 64,804 was polled as follows: Brown, 36,558; Hill, 18,222; Furlow, 10,024. Brown carried the Army vote, receiving 10,012 votes to 3,324 and 1,889 for Hill and Furlow, respectively.⁴¹

The planters continued to be plagued by troubles. Some of their sons and overseers were away with the Confederate Army, and many of their Negroes had deserted. To add to their woes, there was an inadequate market for their cotton. Some of it could be shipped to England, but not nearly enough to prevent the piling up of a surplus.

The gravity of the situation induced the General Assembly to recommend that the cotton crop be reduced and more grain be planted for home consumption. Subsequently this recommendation was made mandatory in an act "To prevent and punish the planting and cultivating in the State of Georgia, over a certain quantity of land in Cotton during the war with the Abolitionists." It placed a limitation of three acres to every field hand between the ages of fifteen and fifty-five years, and decreed that hands older or younger should be counted two for one. A fine of five hundred dollars was provided for every acre over and above the amount allowed, one-half of which was to go to the prosecutor or informer and the other half for the support of indigent soldiers in the county concerned.⁴²

As the war progressed prices of all commodities soared. Manufactured goods became so scarce and so expensive that many formerly well-dressed citizens were forced to deny themselves new garments. The price of calico increased from \$2.25 per yard in March, 1863, to \$10 per yard in January, 1864, and finally to \$15 per yard in October, 1864. At the end of the war shirting material sold at \$6 a yard, blankets were \$70 each and shoe leather was \$15 per pound. 43

Southerners generally had hearts filled with sadness and minds beset by economic worries in the gloomy year of 1864. Confederate currency became so depreciated in value that the Confederate Congress passed a law providing for its compulsory reduction. This funding act provided for a thirty-three and one-third per cent discount upon all treasury notes of five dollars or more. 44 This occasioned great concern throughout the South, but The Weekly Sumter Republication commented optimistically:

"We are no financier but it does seem to us that the passage of just such a bill at this time is what the country needed there is no real cause for alarm. The bonds of the Government are certainly good if the South gets her independence..." 45

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THE CONFEDERACY FALTERS

The war came to Georgia on September 19, 1863, when Federal forces moved across the Tennessee border for a two-day engagement at Chickamauga. Then, little by little, the Yankees inched their way southward to launch attacks upon Kennesaw Mountain, Stone Mountain and Atlanta.

Americus felt a surge of pride when news reached it that Lieutenant Colonel Cutts had been promoted to the grade of Colonel on February 27, 1864. A few months later, on June 5, he was assigned to the command of a division of artillery, composed of his own and Lieutenant Colonel Richardson's battalions. Major John Lane was promoted to the command of Cutts' Battalion. 46

On May 4 this battalion, then temporarily attached to Anderson's Division, had left its winter quarters on the Rapidan and proceeded to the Wilderness. There it was engaged in battle for two days. Shortly thereafter, it participated in engagements at Spottsylvania Court House on May 9 and at Hanover Junction on May 23. In the latter engagement, the enemy used mortars for the first time in the field, but Cutts' Battalion fired so accurately that the Federal commanders resorted to the expedient of moving only a few of their troops across the North Anna River at a given time. 47

After General Ulysses S. Grant moved his forces by a left flank, the battalion marched to Cold Harbor and, on June 3, went into position on Turkey Ridge. After a few days of artillery dueling, Major Lane moved his men to Chesterfield Heights. There, on the north bank of the Appomattox near Petersburg, they proceeded to fortify a position known as the Archer House. 48

Sergeant Major Harris, the faithful chronicler of Cutts' Battalion, wrote of subsequent developments:

"For five weeks Major Lane with inferior guns, and far inferior ammunition, fought the enemy more or less every day or night, with unyielding tenacity. Guns were disabled, works knocked down, many of the best and bravest men and officers killed and wounded; but new guns were mounted, the works rebuilt, and as often as the enemy's guns on that front sent a shot into the city, the iron watchdogs on Archer's Hill belched forth their thunders in defense, forcing the vandals to turn from the shelling of women and children to defend themselves. The Petersburg Press was loud in its praise of 'our strong batteries on the Chesterfield side.' Finally after in vain attempting to silence our guns, a sort of tacit truce prevailed. Whenever the enemy attempted to shell the town, a few shots from Archer's House would produce perfect silence; the enemy ceasing their fire to prevent our guns from enfilading their infantry line. Under this arrangement the Federal batteries on our front became comparatively useless and were moved further to their left. Subsequently Major Land with all the guns of his Battalion, except the two 30-pounders, were ordered to the more immediate Petersburg front, and now holds position on the Jerusalem Plank road and other points to the westward." 49

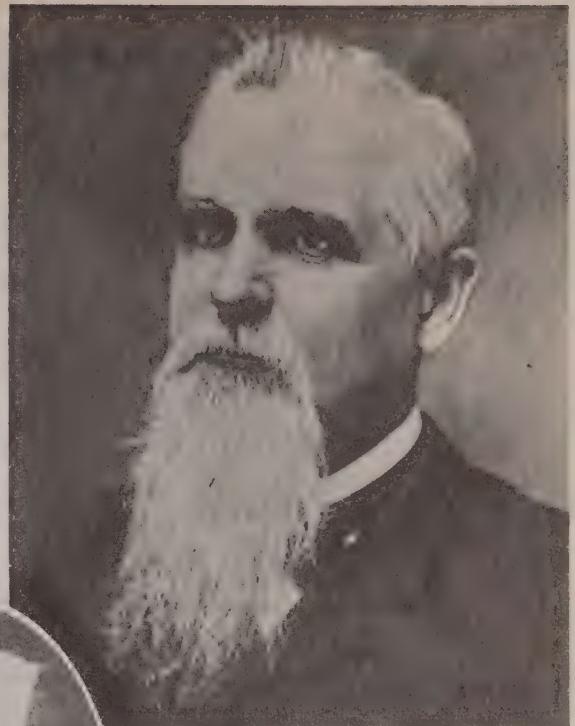
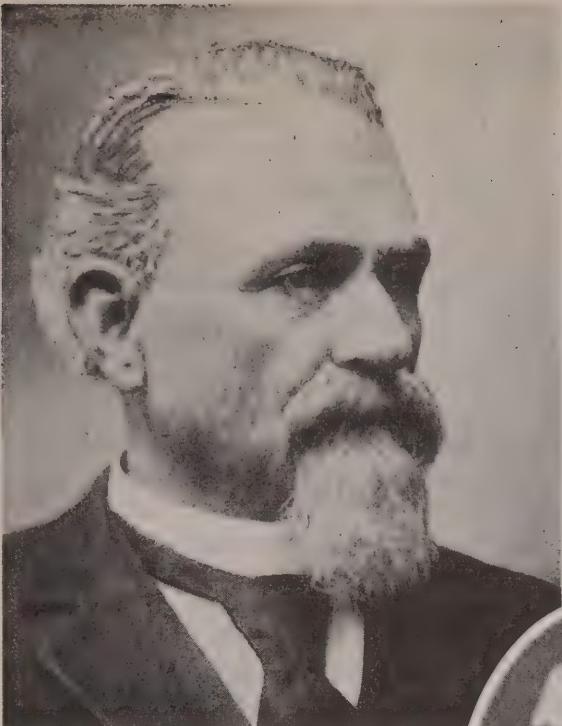
Meanwhile, the 10th Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, was ordered on April 25 to report to General Lee at Orange Court House. Upon arriving there it was assigned to General A. R. Wright's Brigade, Anderson's Division, A. P. Hill's Corps. In the ensuing weeks it participated in all of the battles incident to the campaign then underway. The 10th Battalion distinguished itself in the desperate charge upon the enemy's fortified position at Spottsylvania Court House, on May 14. 50

On the second day of June the unit suffered a great misfortune in the loss of its efficient and gallant commanding officer, Major John Emory Rylander, who was killed at Cold Harbor. The command devolved upon Captain (later Major) James D. Frederick. 51

The battalion was decimated on June 22-23 when, while engaged in battle near Petersburg, it lost eighty-one of its two hundred men to death and wounds. Its conduct on the latter date elicited a battlefield compliment from General Wright, who particularly noted the dashing gallantry of the Sumter County men. 52

"That this little battalion deserves great credit, there can be no doubt. The men were unused to fire, having been performing garrison duty until the 14th of May, . . . but they did stand, did fight and proved the efficiency of the noble material of which it is composed." 53

The 12th Georgia Regiment, of which the Muckalee Guards had become Company A, also was busily participating in the various decisive battles taking place in Virginia. Willis A. Hawkins had advanced rapidly to the grade of lieutenant colonel, only to resign his regimental post on January 1, 1863,



CIVIL WAR LEADERS: (*top, left*) Colonel Allen Sherrod Cutts, (*right*) Major Moses Speer, (*lower, left*) Uriah Bullock Harrold, (*right*) General Philip Cook, and (*center*) General Howell Cobb.

and return home because of "an impairment of health." He had earlier been succeeded as captain of Company A by Samuel Dawson. 54

Moving rapidly in the last year of fighting, the Twelfth participated in battles at The Wilderness, May 5 - 6; at Spottsylvania, May 7 - 12; at Cold Harbor, June 3 (at which time the only officers of Company A remaining were Captain Joseph E. Markette and Lieutenant H. A. Crittendon); in Early's raid on Washington during the Shenandoah Campaign; at the Second Battle of Winchester, September 19; at Cedar Creek, October 18, and in the attack on Fort Stedman, March 25, 1865. Among the few Sumter men remaining in Company A who surrendered at Appomattox were Privates D. H. Edwards, Bradley Teel and N. H. White. 55

Other units from Americus and Sumter County played roles of varying importance in the great Confederate drama. One of these was the Sumter Cavalry, which had become a part of the 12th State Guards. 56 Another was Company K (Sumter Light Guards) of the Fourth Georgia Regiment, which, toward the end of the war, was commanded by Captain John M. Shiver. He had risen steadily from the grade of corporal at the beginning of the war, and was to be acting colonel of the regiment at the surrender. 57 The regimental commander was General Philip Cook, a former lawyer at Forsyth and Oglethorpe, who had farmed in Sumter County in the years 1844-50. Major T. M. Furlow's Battalion, Georgia Militia, which he had organized and equipped at personal expense, became a part of the 11th Georgia Regiment and was assigned to guard duty at Anderson Prison. He later became a lieutenant colonel and participated in battles at Atlanta and Griswoldville. 58

ANDERSON PRISON CAMP

Early in 1864 the Confederate Government ordered Captain W. S. Winder to select a site suitable for the establishment of a camp in which to imprison captured Federal soldiers, the Confederacy having been unsuccessful in its efforts to effect a general exchange of prisoners. Accordingly, the captain selected twenty acres 59 near Anderson Station 60 (the "ville" was added after the war when "Station" was dropped 61), a one-house stop on the Southwestern railroad 62 about twelve miles northeast of Americus. A breastworks was thrown up and a fifteen-foot stockade wall built by some five hundred Negroes sent by General Howell Cobb, commander of the Militia districts of Georgia and Florida. 63

The first group of 840 prisoners arrived on March 1, 1864. Soon hundreds more were arriving every day, so it was necessary to buy an additional ten acres of land. To provide a burying ground for prisoners who soon were dying of smallpox, scurvy and diarrhea, adjacent land belonging to Benjamin B. Dykes was condemned. 64

Because of crowded conditions, insufficient food supplies and a serious shortage of medicines, Confederate officials offered to exchange prisoners

with the Federal authorities. Edwin M. Stanton, United States secretary of war, refused to "exchange skeletons for healthy men." Finally, in utter desperation, the Confederacy offered in August to return ten or fifteen thousand sick and wounded men without requiring an equivalent return. In that month alone, three thousand prisoners died; many, many more expired before the offer was accepted in December. 65

One of the dire needs at Camp Sumter, as the interior of the stockade was called, was fresh water. Without it men perished; if they drank of the polluted streams within the camp, they inevitably became ill. In August a freshet opened a clear, pure spring which had been obscured by heavy rains. To the sick and exhausted prisoners it seemed that Divine Providence had intervened in their behalf, so they gratefully named the spring Providence Spring. 67

In April, 1867, Captain Henry Wirz, a native of Switzerland, arrived to take charge of the interior of the stockade. He was in command during most of the time while a total of 52, 345 prisoners were confined, 13, 259 of whom died and were buried there.68 In the more than ninety years that have elapsed since the prison was closed in October, 1865, Captain Wirz has been one of the nation's most controversial figures. Northerners have assailed him for alleged beastiality and excessively cruel treatment; some elements in the South have defended him as an innocent victim of circumstances beyond his control. He was executed in Washington, D. C., on November 10, 1865, for his role in affairs at what was then termed the infamous Anderson Prison.

Some years later the Georgia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a monument to his memory in the center of the town of Andersonville. Its inscription reads:

"When time shall have softened passion and prejudice, when reason shall have stripped the masks from misrepresentation, then Justice holding evenly her scales will require much of past censure and praise to change places." 69

In writing of Captain Wirz and the whole tragedy of Andersonville, however, General N. P. Chapman, judge advocate of the military court which tried him, wrote with some degree of prophecy:

"The Wirz monument, standing in the village, is its own condemnation. It need only stand there; a time will come when the South will be glad to bury it from sight...." 70

CONFEDERATE HOSPITALS

As the Confederate forces waged increasingly desperate battles, the number of sick and wounded mounted steadily. With each defeat and re-

treat, it was necessary for hospitals to be moved some distance from the scene of battle. As Federal forces pounded relentlessly at the defenses north of Atlanta, first one and then several hospital units were moved to southwest Georgia.

The first hospital to relocate in Americus occupied the Furlow Masonic Female College building. It was named for General Braxton Bragg, CSA, and had on its staff one Dr. Adams and two assistants, Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Harrison. A volunteer nurse said of it, "The Bragg is very large and has a ward about a mile in the country, in a beautiful spot. A large brick college is its main building." 71

The second, Foard Hospital, was established in a series of buildings occupying three sides of a block across from the central square. The unit arrived in Americus on the morning of August 19, 1864, having traveled by train from West Point, Alabama. Among the doctors serving with it were Dr. Wellford, Dr. Reese, Dr. Foard, Dr. Cross and Dr. Gore. The chief nurse, Kate Cumming, was a Scottish woman of gentle birth who had been reared in Mobile. She had answered an appeal for volunteer nurses, and served until the end of the war. 72

The hospital chaplain asked Miss Cumming to see if one of the local citizens would not take him to board. None would do so at first, but finally a rich man of his own religious persuasion took him in. The first month's board was two hundred dollars; the next month's was to be three hundred. The chaplain, who drew but eighty dollars per month from the Confederacy, fled to a hospital cubbyhole. 73

Foard Hospital had scarcely begun to function smoothly when disaster struck. Late on the afternoon of August 31, a nearby cotton warehouse caught fire. It was packed to capacity with cotton which had been sent from every section of the state for safekeeping. Thousands of bales were consumed as flames roared convulsively through the large structure and attacked adjacent buildings. The fire was believed to have originated from a small piece of lighted paper which a little Negro boy had unwittingly thrown down. 74

The fire was a fearful sight; a bystander reported that it could not have burned faster had the cotton been saturated with turpentine. Except for one two-story building, two entire business squares were destroyed. The loss was estimated to exceed four million dollars. 75

The hospital workers were able to save practically no equipment, as their building, along with others, was dynamited in an effort to contain the blaze. Patients were evacuated to the homes of townfolk and people from the county. Stoves were set up in an open field and food was prepared there for ambulatory patients.

Later, tents were erected in the public square and the sick and wounded were removed to them. There was a large incidence of gangrene among the men and the screams of those so afflicted could be heard "for two squares off." 77

The hospital had few dishes, knives, forks or spoons; two of the officers made their own out of wood. One of the nurses made a trip to Macon in an effort to obtain these necessary items, but to no avail. She did, however, pay five dollars for ten common hairpins and three dollars for a ball of home-spun thread. 78

Every day a foraging expedition went out in a little wagon and bought eggs, butter and buttermilk from the country people. The ladies of the town fed the men for a while, but soon they confined their assistance to occasionally mending clothes and making haversacks for them. 79

Another Confederate hospital in Americus was under the supervision of Dr. Boling Pope and his assistant, Dr. Howard. The former had recently married Mrs. Bessie Ayres, a beautiful young widow who was prominent in Memphis society. They had taken up residence in Colonel W. A. Maxwell's house while the Colonel and his family were refugeeing on their Lee County plantation. The new Mrs. Pope was in Americus on a temporary visa, and periodically she had to return to Memphis and have it renewed. This prompted Dr. Pope's cousin, Miss Eliza Andrews, who was visiting from her home in Washington-Wilkes (so called to distinguish it from "Washington City"), to say,

"It seems funny for a white woman to have to get a pass to see her husband, just like the negro men here do when their wives live on another plantation." 80

In the last two years of the war, the rich farm area of which Americus was the center produced all of the food supplies used by both the Virginia and Tennessee armies, and so earned for itself the nickname of "Egypt." 81

Despite the sadness over the deaths of many local men, and perhaps because of the growing realization that the Confederacy was weakening, life in Americus during the winter of 1864-1865 was almost feverishly gay. The residents had suffered inconveniences because of the war, but as yet there had been no cases of real privation. Indeed, one of the nurses stationed in the town observed tartly:

"This is said to be a very wealthy place; and were we to judge from the carriages and fine horses we see, I should think the impressing officer had not been down this way for some time." 82

The social event of the season was the wedding of Miss Kate Furlow, 83 daughter of Colonel T. M. Furlow, and Merrel Callway, a native of Washington-Wilkes and a graduate of Mercer University in the class of 1862. 84 They were married in a formal ceremony at the Methodist Church, the bride being

attended by eighteen young ladies while the bridegroom stood alone -- all of the local young men being away at war.⁸⁵ After the ceremony, Colonel Furlow entertained at a bridal dinner, the last affair of such elegance for many years.

Confederate battle losses mounted with each defeat, and there was a desperate need for replacements for the dead and injured. Governor Joseph E. Brown ordered Colonel B. B. Hamilton to obtain six armed men and 30 rounds of ammunition at Macon, the temporary capital, and then proceed to Sumter County to arrest all men "embraced in my late proclamation for forty days service" who had not already enrolled for military duty. "All, rich and poor," the Governor added, "will be required to submit to, and obey the law."⁸⁶

As the grim news of Atlanta's surrender reached Americus, consternation filled many a heart. When Sherman approached Macon on his march to the sea, fear and near-panic caused many residents of Americus to flee further south.

Postmaster William P. Haines hurriedly locked the door of his office and carried the Post Office records to the swamps bordering Muckalee Creek, where he buried them. Then he returned to his office in the courthouse (the old post office building next to the Presbyterian church being used no more),⁸⁷ and calmly awaited the arrival of Federal troops.

The Presbyterian ladies carefully wrapped the church's beautiful silver communion service and buried it for safekeeping.⁸⁸ So many residents did the same thing with their silver plate and jewels that the town must have resembled a freshly plowed garden.

As it happened, the Federal forces did not reach Americus in their furious push to Savannah and the coast. A few Union Army stragglers and some low-class Confederate deserters did pillage plantations in various parts of southwest Georgia, but they did no damage in Americus.

By this time additional hospitals had been evacuated to Americus from north Georgia and were encamped in tents near the railroad depot.⁸⁹

While the hospitals carried on their mission of mercy, Miss Cumming, chief nurse at Foard Hospital, set down a few comments in her diary which indicate that even in those tragic days there were folk who had not enough of their own affairs to keep them busy.

"The good people of this place," she wrote, "have fallen into an error that we poor mortals are very apt to commit; that is, talking thoughtlessly about what we are totally ignorant of, and thus doing gross injustice to persons' characters, and hurting their feelings without ever intending it. Scarcely a day passes that we do not hear some slander against the attaches of the hospitals: all suffer."

"We are told that the surgeons had better be at the front, as they kill more than they cure; and that they drink all the liquor and eat all the good things provided for the soldiers. I cannot keep from laughing at all this, although we ladies come in for a share of the scandal..."

"As a whole," however, Miss Cumming concluded, "the people have been very kind. We have received more assistance from them than at any other place where we have been. Several ladies send us a pitcher of sweet milk daily. A lady, on my telling her that one of the men could not go to church for want of clothes, gave him a nice new suit. And the ladies' society had a pair of shoes made for a soldier who was barefoot..." ⁹⁰

The Foard Hospital was moved to Gainesville, Alabama, shortly before Christmas, making the trip in "a very nice box-car." A few months later Dr. Pope's hospital was moved to Cuthbert.

Most of Americus' able-bodied men were away with the Confederate States Army during the years 1861-1865. Of those remaining, several occupied positions of importance in connection with the "Cause."

One such person was Uriah B. Harrold, the recently-arrived cotton man. He was in the commissary department of the Confederate Government, stationed in Americus. With the establishment of Anderson Prison Camp, he was made responsible for furnishing all provisions to the forces there. ⁹³ This was both an important and a highly lucrative enterprise.

Colonel W. T. Davenport, who had but recently opened a dry goods and men's furnishings store when war came, was elected judge of the inferior court. Early in 1865 he was appointed tithe agent for Sumter, Schley and Webster counties. ⁹⁴

Another Americus man, J. W. Wheatley, was serving in Atlanta as aide-de-camp to General Henry Kent McKay at the time of Sherman's occupation. The two men had been partners in an Americus drug store ten years earlier. ⁹⁵ McKay had become a lawyer in the intervening years and was clearly marked for a distinguished career in civil life as well as in military circles.

Death claimed a number of well-known citizens during the war years, most of whom were buried in a new cemetery situated on a hillside at the eastern terminus of East Church Street. Named "Oak Grove" because of the magnificent oaks growing within its boundaries, this new cemetery quickly replaced the old burial ground located on the north side of East Forsyth Street at the present intersection of Prince Street.

The end of the war came on April 10, 1865, as General Lee met General Grant on a sodden road near Appomattox, Virginia, and surrendered. The weak, ill-equipped and decimated Confederate forces could now go home. Only, for some of them, there were now no homes to

which they could return. For others there was no tomorrow; they figuratively lived in the past for the remainder of their lives.

As peace settled across the defeated Southland, the people of Americus counted up the cost they had paid in four years of war. Except in human life, the little town had suffered very little. The toll of dead, however, was heavy. There were dozens of fresh graves in the new cemetery, but the bodies of most of Americus' heroic sons would never rest in home soil.

There was no joy in Americus when news of Lee's surrender reached it. There was, to be sure, relief that the increasingly ghastly struggle was ended, and thankfulness that some sons and husbands and fathers would be coming home. People were grateful that their town had been spared and their rich farm lands left unsullied. But they knew with a dreadful certainty that life would get worse before it improved. The future loomed dark and fearful.

As muffled church bells tolled solemnly in tribute to Americus' fallen heroes, the weary, black-garbed citizens met at the Methodist church for a joint service of prayer. This was their darkest hour.

Chapter V

THE FEDERAL OCCUPATION

(1865 - 1876)

The first Federal troops to reach Americus arrived in May, 1865,¹ and immediately imposed strict military rule upon the town and its inhabitants.

Headquarters for the colonel in charge of the occupying forces was established in the residence of General Howell Cobb, at the northeast corner of Troup



FEDERAL HEADQUARTERS

and College Streets.² From that time forward, local citizens would cross the street rather than walk past the detested Federal flag fluttering in front of the beautiful house.³

The Cobb home, along with the residences of T. M. Furlow and C. J. Malone, had long been identified as being located on the Starkville road. As the town grew and Troup Street was extended, however, the Starkville appellation gradually fell into disuse. Some years after the war, ex-Governor Troup having long since lost his early popularity and General Robert E. Lee having become the shining symbol of all that was best in Southern life, the name of the town's main thoroughfare was changed to Lee Street.⁴

It did not take long for Americus to realize that life under a Union Army commander was quite different from anything the town had ever known. This difference was forcefully demonstrated shortly after the Federal troops arrived.

The Sumter Republican made an uncomplimentary remark about the presence of Northern soldiers. The ink was scarcely dry on the last copy of the edition in which it appeared before General Steadman suppressed further publication. Previously an ardent Whig, Editor Hancock discreetly joined the Democratic faction when he was permitted to resume operations a long month later.⁵

Few men in Americus have ever been so long or so highly esteemed as was Charles W. Hancock. He arrived from Washington-Wilkes when only three hundred people lived in the village,⁶ and remained to become the editorial conscience of a town with ten times that number of inhabitants. Intensely patriotic, he served as a private in the Sumter Light Guards for one year before being discharged as over age.⁷ His title of "Colonel" was a courtesy deferentially conferred by his admirers in Americus.

The quaint, high-roofed house in which Colonel Hancock lived, on Malone (College) Street, located midway between the Malone residence on Troup Street and the Harrold home on Malone



HANCOCK HOUSE

Street, was a popular gathering place for the brightest minds of southwest Georgia. Subsequently it was occupied by the Ausley, McGhee, and C. M. Williams families

Early in the Federal occupation, Walter T. Davenport, tithe agent for Sumter, Schley and Webster counties, was arrested by Federal officers and the warehouse keys removed from his person. He was taken to Macon and forced to take the oath of allegiance to the United States.⁸

Federal soldiers were in evidence all around Americus at any time of day or night. They regularly mounted guard in the courthouse square. For a brief time there was even a company of Negro soldiers quartered in the town.⁹

Drills were held daily in the field at the rear of the Dudley home on Lamar Street. The rat-tat-tat of a drum¹⁰ and the sound of marching feet were audible for several blocks, but the local citizens never condescended to indicate by so much as a glance that they were aware of what was taking place. Occupation was something to be borne with fortitude, but never, never to be enjoyed in any respect.

On September 15, 1865, David H. Hill was appointed postmaster, succeeding the popular "Uncle Billie" Haines. He served only one month and nine days, however, being succeeded at the end of that time by Cooper Godwin.¹¹

At about the same time, Captain John L. Adderton, hero of the Granberry Guards, was accorded an unusual distinction. He was elected judge of the inferior court in a hotly contested race in which he was opposed by thirty-five other contestants!¹²

At the Convention held in Milledgeville in October and November of 1865, Sumter County's delegates were Colonel A. S. Cutts, Dr. W. W. Barlow and Wright Brady.¹³

The last-named man, Americus' first resident, had in the years since his arrival become an increasingly useful citizen. A native of Wilkinson County, where he was born in 1808, he was the son of William and Penelope (Mimms) Brady. In 1859 he had relinquished active management of his hotel and saloon in Americus and moved to his plantation in the county, where he lived until his death in 1871. His wife was the former Miss Jane Livingston of Jefferson County.¹⁴

A contemporary described Mr. Brady in these words:

"Wright Brady was no common man. He had a large brain, both active and strong, and had fortune smiled on his birth, no doubt he would have ranked with the Lumpkins, Doughertys and Cobbs. His mind was eminently fitted for the intricacies of the law, and without an education it was said that he knew more law than any lawyer in southwest Georgia. The love of litigation amount to a passion with him. The dockets for 30 years were not clear of his name...."¹⁵

The first months of peace brought many new problems, the most pressing being those pertaining to economics. Thousands of people who had been wealthy before the war now found themselves poor, while those who had been less fortunate were now quite often destitute. Many people were "land poor" - that is, they had plantations or farms, but no one to work them. Some of the ex-slaves, who in many instances had supposed they no longer would have to work, finally went back to their former masters, receiving either wages or a share of the crops in return for their services. In time this arrangement evolved into something new to the South: a widespread system of share-cropping. It proved to be the salvation of the desperate farmers and small planters, who could not afford to offer the same inducements as the larger planters.¹⁶

But it was not only the small operators who were afflicted by cares. In December, 1865, Howell Cobb wrote to his wife from "Dominie Place" in Sumter County:

".....I find a worse state of things with the negroes than I expected, and am unable even now to say what we shall be able to do. From Nathan Barwick's place every negro has left. There is no one to feed the stock, and on the other places none has contracted as yet.....I intend to send Nathan Barwick to [my plantation in] Baldwin on Wednesday to see what hands he can get there.....I am offering them even better terms than I gave last year, to wit, one-third of cotton and corn crop, and they feed and clothe themselves, but nothing satisfies them. Grant them one thing, and they demand something more, and there is no telling where they would stop. The truth is, I am thoroughly disgusted with free negro labor, and am determined that the next year shall close my planting operations with them.....That miserable creature Wilkes Flag sent old Ellick down to get the negroes from Nathan Barwick's place. Old Ellick staid sic out in the woods and sent for the negroes and they were bargaining with him in the night and telling Barwick in the day that they were going to stay with him. The moment they got their money, they started for the railroad...."¹⁷

The labor situation became so acute that a large group of Sumter County planters met with planters from other parts of the state at Savannah on December 9, 1865, to consider their predicament. It was agreed that along the coast and in southwest Georgia, standard monthly wages would be fifteen

dollars for a full grown male and ten dollars for a full grown female. It was recognized that in south Georgia a large majority of laborers worked for a part of the crop, one-third if they provided for themselves and one-fourth with everything furnished. Where money was paid, it was a common practice to pay one-half at the end of each month and the other half at the end of the year. This was done to hold the Negro if possible until the end of the harvest season. Many owners and overseers took advantage of his ignorance and never paid him more than half of what was due him. This permitted the overseers, at least, to add a new graft to their wholesale thievery against absentee owners. 18

The Freedmen's Bureau, a Federal agency, was set up to care for the Negro in all his relationships. It supervised his contracts with white employers, provided food and clothing for him, and even established special courts in which he should be tried. The Bureau was a godsend to a group of people who were in dire need of help. The white people favored it so long as it adhered to its basic function, but they opposed it bitterly when it attempted to establish the Negro as a creature with social and political rights. 19

Confederate money, of course, was worthless at the end of the war. It was burned by the valise full, used to light the cigars and pipes of wags, plastered on the walls of new houses and, with many a sentimental sigh, stored in attic trunks. However they disposed of it, though, the former citizens of the Confederate States of America knew that it represented not only their lost dreams of empire, but also most of their vanished worldly wealth.

Records kept by a broker interestingly reveal the history of the devaluation of Confederate currency. On January 1, 1861, one dollar in gold was equal to one dollar and five cents in Confederate currency. That same gold dollar would have purchased, on June 15, 1862, two dollars; on December 1, 1863, twenty dollars; and on December 1, 1864, thirty dollars. On January 1, 1865, one dollar in gold was worth sixty dollars in Confederate paper money; by April 20, one hundred dollars; six days later, two hundred dollars; the next day, three hundred dollars; the next day five hundred dollars. On April 30, 1865, one gold dollar was worth one thousand Confederate dollars; and on May 1, it reached the peak panic value of twelve hundred dollars in Confederate treasury notes! 20

In the first months after Federal troops occupied most of Georgia, many people were hungry and homeless. Americus and Sumter County had been fortunate in being situated off of the conquerors' path, but the lack of adequate labor on plantations and farms meant that many acres would remain untilled. To alleviate the suffering of the near-destitute, Governor Charles J. Jenkins ordered Messrs. Philip Cook, A. S. Cutts and D. A. Vason to distribute to the needy in their Congressional District a portion of a shipload of flour, meal and bacon which had been received at Savannah from the Ladies Southern Relief Society, of Baltimore. 21

Georgians, including the people of Americus, gradually became accustomed to the presence of Federal troops and the drastic changes the war had caused in their lives. Soon there began to be heard rumblings of a sort quite different than the roar of distant cannons. There developed a feverish desire to rebuild the state and, indeed, to improve upon the ante-bellum standard. Grandiose plans were proposed for every aspect of town and country life. Reconstruction in Georgia had begun.

In no way was the enthusiasm for rebuilding and developing the state more fully expressed than in the railroad fever which soon hypnotized Georgia's entrepreneurs. The war had scarcely been over a calendar year before charters were granted to ten new railroad companies. In the next few years the construction of these roads became involved in an incredible amount of dishonesty and political chicanery. From the welter of corruption there ultimately were evolved some half-dozen operating railroads, most of them in the southern part of the state.²²

In March, 1866, the legislature approved the terms proposed for the consolidation of the Muscogee Railroad with the Southwestern Railroad, which served Americus. The liabilities of the former were assumed and its stock taken over by the latter at a price of eighty-seven and one-half cents on the dollar. The Southwestern's Fort Gaines branch had been inoperative since 1865, for iron removed from its roadbed during the war had not yet been replaced. The railroad's cotton traffic had declined from 206, 307 bales in 1859-60 to a low of 87, 250 bales in 1865-66.²³

Shortly after the end of the war, a group of Americus women formed the Ladies' Memorial Association. The announced purpose of the organization was "to commemorate the deeds and to care for the last resting place of those who died in defense of their country." On the first Memorial Day, April 26, 1866, they met together and placed spring flowers upon the graves of Americus heroes of the Lost Cause.²⁴

On December 5, 1866, the Georgia Conference of the Methodist Church held its last meeting in Americus. In the next year, the North and South Georgia conferences were organized and thereafter held separate meetings.²⁵ The church in Georgia was then known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to distinguish it from the church in the North, which had expelled Bishop James O. Andrew of Georgia because, near the beginning of the war, he was a slaveowner through inheritance from his late wife.

In 1866 Americus acquired a new financial institution when J. W. Wheatley and his brother-in-law, W. H. C. Dudley, formed a partnership and established J. W. Wheatley & Company. This banking house was affiliated with William Bryce & Company, a secure and respected New York firm.

The people of Americus became considerably agitated in the winter of '66-'67, all because of a giant timepiece. Furlow Masonic Female College

had ordered a clock as soon as the war ended, but when it finally arrived, it was inexplicably permitted to remain crated.²⁷ After some months of speculation, the Republican inquired irritably whether the town would ever get a clock. When it appeared that the Furlow trustees were in no hurry to have the clock installed, local citizens took matters into their own hands. As a result, a neat clock tower was erected in the center of the courthouse roof and a handsome clock with alarm attachment was installed.²⁸

The man responsible for the actual installation of the clock was a newcomer by the name of James Fricker.²⁹ A native of New York, he had come South in 1858, worked in Columbus and Atlanta and served in the Confederate Army. He arrived in Americus early in 1867 and entered into a partnership with Dr. Leitner, a jeweler and clock merchant. Soon he bought out his partner and continued and expanded the business under his own name. Shortly before his death twenty years later, Mr. Fricker sold his business to his brother Charles Atwell Fricker. The latter was a valued citizen of Americus for many years before he moved to California when past middle age. Charles A. Fricker married, first, Miss Bettie Smith, and, second, Miss Mamie Charlton of Savannah, the latter being a cousin of the second Mrs. W. D. Bailey of Americus.³⁰

THE POLITICAL ARENA

In 1866 the end of the war was officially proclaimed by President Andrew Johnson. This marked the beginning of actual Reconstruction. Georgia at that time seethed and swayed as the Carpet Bag government sought to enforce various nefarious schemes upon the suspicious citizens. A carpet-bagger, strictly speaking, was a Republican adventurer who came to the South after the war and won political office by controlling the Negro vote. Georgia was overrun by men of this ilk.³¹

The first post-war election was held at Macon in December, 1867. Early the next year, conservative Georgians organized clubs throughout the state in an effort to "keep the state from falling into the hands of carpet-baggers, Negroes and scalawags."³²

The Constitutional Convention of 1868 was held in Atlanta from December 9, 1867 through March 11, 1868. It provided a new state constitution, authorized the removal of the capital from Milledgeville to Atlanta, abolished the inferior courts, and directed the General Assembly to provide a general system of free education for all children in the state. The 13th District, of which Sumter County was a part, was represented at the convention by H. K. McKay, J. E. Hall, F. Snead, Robert Lumpkin and Jesse Dinkins.³³

Americus citizens had a particular interest in the activities of the convention. A hundred or so of the leading figures in the town had affixed

their signatures to a lengthy petition pertaining to the service provided by the Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia. The petition stated that this company controlled the Southwestern, the only railroad providing service to Americus, and that its practices in the matter of freight and passenger tariffs were "unjust and oppressive incriminations." The petitioners, of whom A. J. Buchanan was the first, requested the Constitutional Convention to incorporate in the new constitution a clause or section providing that the General Assembly have regulatory and corrective powers in such instances. Their plea met with little immediate success. 34

Rufus Bullock, a Republican opportunist, was elected governor at the end of a bitter campaign against popular General John B. Gordon. His success was attributed to the large number of Negroes who exercised their voting privilege for the first time. 35

An interesting account of this first post-war election is contained in a letter written from Americus on April 27, 1868, by Second Lieutenant A. McIntyre to First Lieutenant John E. Hosmer, A.A.A. General, District of Georgia, Atlanta. He wrote in part:

"I have the honor to report that in pursuance of Par. VII, S. O. Special Order No. 51, Military District of Georgia, I left Macon, Ga. on the 13th inst with Co. "E" 16th N. J. Infantry, and took station at this place with a view of keeping the peace during the Election for the ratification of the constitution that took place on the 20th, 21", 22" and 23" inst and to see that every man entitled to vote had the privilege to vote as he should deem proper. On the morning of the 20th inst I took possession of the Court-house with the approval of the Mayor after consulting him on the matter. The Court-house is situated in about the center of the city - surrounded by a fence in the form of an octagon with four gates on opposite sides leading into the enclosure between the Courthouse and the fence.

"On consultation with the Deputy Sheriff - the Sheriff being absent - on the morning of the 20th inst, we agreed that the white voters should pass in at one of the gates, go to the Polls and vote at a window of the same side of the Courthouse and pass out at a gate nearby at right angles with the one they entered. The Colored voters to enter at a gate opposite to the one that the White men passed out of, vote at a window on the same side of the Court-house and pass out at a gate at right angles to the one they entered.

"This arrangement kept the whites and blacks separated while inside of the enclosure and appeared to me to be the only way to preserve order around the polls. I placed sentinels at each of the gates with orders to carry this system out rigidly....." 36

Lieutenant McIntyre noted that Negro voters were not molested by white voters, but the latter bitterly opposed separation of the two races. Only one case of a white voter directing a colored voter's choice was positively iden-

tified. Outside of the courthouse, however, there was a spirited campaign to buy the votes of the Negroes.

The first meeting of the legislature to be held under the Constitution of 1868 convened in Atlanta on July 4, 1868. On July 21, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was ratified by both houses, thus providing Georgia with the qualifications specified by Congress for readmission to the Union. On July 30 military authority was withdrawn, but troops still remained throughout the state. 37

On July 23 the State Democratic Convention assembled in Atlanta to choose its presidential electors. Eloquent speeches were made by three of Georgia's giants, Robert Toombs, Howell Cobb and Benjamin H. Hill. 38 Colonel Charles T. Goode of Americus represented Sumter County. He also served as assistant marshal for a gala parade held in conjunction with the political conclave. 39

It was in this period that the plantation system began to fall apart. The planters experienced increasing difficulty in obtaining adequate numbers of field hands who could be relied upon to work regularly. Few people could afford to buy an entire plantation intact. 40 Many of the planters, already impoverished by the war, decided to cease the struggle. They moved into Americus and enjoyed the sociability afforded by friends who lived there and who, in increasing numbers, were shocking their families by "entering trade."

As the great plantations were left to the care of overseers and tenant farmers, the handsome houses situated on them were left to the ambitious people of that class. 41 They were to dot the county for many years to come, most of them gradually sagging tiredly and losing all vestiges of paint, but always retaining a suggestion of their former grandeur.

The planters who moved into town found many pleasures that were not enjoyed in rural areas. But the people of Americus were beginning to show the effects of post-war poverty. The women wore faded gowns, the men more often than not wore shiny and darned frock coats, and their horses appeared weary and undernourished. 42

There was little money for many of the essentials of life, and practically none for luxuries. Men who formerly had sent their sons away to be educated now must content themselves with sending them to local institutions alone. As a result of this, the leaders twenty years hence were scarcely better educated than the wilderness-clearing pioneers of earlier days. 43

In February, 1867, it was learned that George Peabody of Salem, Massachusetts, had bequeathed one million dollars for the purpose of promoting "educational opportunities among the entire population of the Southern and Southwestern states without other distinction than their needs." This money

subsequently administered as the Peabody Educational Fund, was to have a profound effect upon the cause of education in Georgia.⁴⁴ It was several years, however, before Americus or Sumter County would benefit from the munificence of an unknown Yankee.

FIRST BRICK HOUSE

A milestone was passed in 1868 when the town's first brick residence was constructed. Erected by order of Moses Speer, it occupied a large wooded lot on the northeast corner of Jackson and Church streets -- then the most fashionable part of town. The house was a one-story structure with wide piazzas, high ceilings, and French windows.⁴⁵

Moses Speer, the man for whom the house was built, had arrived in Americus in 1854.⁴⁶ A relative of the illustrious Alexander Speer, who moved to Georgia after a distinguished career as secretary of state for South Carolina,⁴⁷ he early evidenced those qualities of heart and mind that were to place him in the forefront with the first citizens of Americus. He had been wounded while serving as a private soldier in the Sumter Light Guards. Subsequently discharged, he went home and became a major in the Georgia Militia, and thereafter was generally known by his military title.⁴⁸ Major Speer's wife was the former Miss Bicey Hooks, sister of William Hooks of Americus. There were no children born of this union. His second wife was the former Miss Laura Cowles, daughter of Asbury and Carline (Bonner) Cowles of Stewart County. Mrs. Speer was a sister of Mrs. Joseph J. Granberry, Mrs. James G. McCrary and Miss Rebecca Cowles, all of Americus.⁴⁹

Another valuable addition to Americus in this period was James M. Clarke, a lawyer who arrived in 1866. He was a native of Putnam County, where he was born on November 8, 1822. After studying law under his uncle, Judge James Clarke, at Lumpkin, he practiced in Buena Vista, Albany and Lumpkin. In 1854, he was elected to the legislature. Shortly thereafter, the Mechanics & Savings Bank of Savannah appointed him manager of its new agency in Lumpkin, which position he filled until the beginning of the war. He served as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in 1860 at Charleston and during the war he was an aide to Governor Brown.

In 1868 James M. Clarke was appointed Judge of the Southwestern Circuit. He served with distinction and subsequently was re-appointed in 1877.⁵⁰

Lumpkin, the town from whence Judge Clarke arrived, had been for some years the principal town of south Georgia. It was the seat of Randolph County from 1828 to 1831, after which time it was the seat of newly-created Stewart County. Lumpkin's size and importance began to diminish gradually after the war, largely because of the breakup of Stewart County's great plantations, but also because it was for many years without the services of a rail-

road. The town and county produced a large number of men who achieved distinction in Atlanta, Macon, Americus and other Georgia towns. Some of the better known families in the 'Sixties were the Boyntons, the Clarkes, the Evanses, the Forts, the Pearsons, the Rawsons, the Singers, the Willifords, the Wimberlys and the Worrills. 51

In 1868 Sumter County chose for its representative to the General Assembly a young man who had but recently become a permanent resident. However, John Addison Cobb had been a familiar figure in the county for a number of years. A son of Howell Cobb and a nephew of John B. Lamar, he had assumed management of the latter's seven plantations and eight hundred Negroes when Colonel Lamar fell in battle. 52

Captain Cobb, as he was called, was born in Athens on October 20, 1838. He entered the University of Georgia at the age of seventeen years and worked for a local dry goods store. At the outbreak of the war he joined the Macon Volunteers, but later transferred to the 16th Georgia when it was made part of Cobb's Brigade. He served as quar-



CAPT. COBB'S HOUSE

termaster sergeant and as aide to his father. In 1860 he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore - the youngest man ever to represent Georgia at such a gathering.

In 1862 he married Miss Lucy Pope Barrow, (great-granddaughter of the distinguished Governor Wilson Lumpkin) of Oglethorpe County, who died in 1880. In 1881 Captain Cobb married as his second wife Miss Martha Lamar Bivins of Americus. 53

An Americus man, Henry Kent McKay, was named to the Supreme Court of Georgia in 1868. 54 Already noted as a successful businessman, a brilliant attorney and a distinguished officer in the Georgia Militia, he now capped his career by several years of noteworthy service on the bench of the state's highest tribunal.

The small band of Episcopalians who had labored so long and so faithfully in their efforts to establish a parish met with slow but continuing success. On October 18, 1868, an appeal to the citizens of Americus resulted in pledges totaling \$1,511 to be used toward the erection of a church building. 56

The cornerstone of Calvary Church was laid on July 1, 1869, by Bishop Beckwith of the Diocese of Georgia. The processional formed at the residence of Dr. E. J. Eldridge (he was renting the Howell Cobb mansion) and moved slowly across the spacious lawn to the north boundary of the property, which adjoined the building site. 57 Thus was begun the first temporal evi-

dence of an institution whose influence upon Americus was to increase quietly but steadily in succeeding years.

Immediately after the Civil War began, Episcopal clergymen throughout the South had ceased to say the prayer, "For the President of The United States And All Others In Authority." At war's end, military commanders ordered the prayer restored to the Church's established ritual. Many clergymen, refusing to obey the order, brought about the closing of their churches, banishment, or imprisonment. All churches in Alabama were closed because the presiding bishop refused to accede to the Federal commander's demands. In Georgia, however, Bishop Elliot decreed that the prayer should be restored. 58

"I know of no one more in need of divine grace," he is reported to have said, "than the President and others in authority in the United States." 59

At a meeting held in Augusta in the month of November, 1865, the House of Bishops and Deputies of the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States had decided upon reunion with the Church in the United States. 60

When General Ulysses S. Grant was inaugurated as President in 1869, he immediately set into motion his system of personal rewards for those persons who had supported his candidacy. As a result of this, Americus acquired a new postmaster in the person of a Hebrew gentleman by the name of Barwald. Hatred was everywhere shown for anything Federal, and a certain element in town lost no time in threatening Mr. Barwald with a coat of tar and feathers if he did not resign. It is to his everlasting credit that he stood his ground and continued to perform the functions of his office. At that time the post office occupied quarters on the second floor of the Hawkins House, a hotel on the southeast corner of Forsyth Street and Cotton Avenue. 61

Americus was host on June 30, 1869, to a frail young flutist, poet and attorney who was establishing himself as one of Georgia's most gifted sons. His name was Sidney Lanier. The occasion of his visit was the delivery of an address to the graduating class at Furlow Masonic Female College. 62

In 1870 The Semi-Weekly Courier, another in a series of short-lived newspapers, announced that E. and J. R. Christian had transferred the books and accounts of the paper to W. J. Perry. 63 A scant nine months later the Courier suspended publication. Mr. Perry moved to Jacksonville, Florida, after selling the paper's assets to one Mr. Morrow of Griffin. 64

Editor Hancock of the Republican, which was published variously as a weekly and as a tri-weekly newspaper, continued to dip his pen in wit and vinegar to delight and upbraid his readers. With tongue in cheek he wrote,

"'Shingle weddings' are now coming into fashion. This novel wedding takes place when the first-born is old enough to spank.... There is a woman living in Sumter County, so cross-eyed that when she weeps, tears from her left eye drop on her right cheek.... The girls of Americus gad about so much that they don't have time to mend their stockings. Poor soles! Colonel Thomas is away seeking pleasure and a rich widow. May he find both." 65

In a more serious vein, Colonel Hancock noted that two street lamps had exploded on the same night. He advised that more care be exercised on the part of the lamp-lighter. He deplored the apparent failure of the Sumter County Agricultural Society, which had been organized by a group of prominent planters a few years previously. "Failure," he wrote, "seems to be the fate of all organizations in this county." 66

Prince Brothers Livery stable acquired a new omnibus, which the editor declared to be the most perfect specimen of its kind ever seen in Americus. He noted that the painting on it was the work of the best artists, representing beautiful scenes, flowers, etcetera. "Much is due Prince Bros. of this city for their general interest in that which will add much pleasure to the Community." 67

"We are requested to state that the Brass Band will entertain the city with a few pieces of choice music, Friday afternoon at 5 o'clock, from their stand in the Court House yard. Good!" 68

The Editor noted that the police were being plagued by the continuous theft of flowers from graves in Oak Grove Cemetery. He remarked sadly upon the shabby, overgrown condition of the Old Cemetery, where rest "the remains of some of our old and cherished citizens." 69

"Americus has at last what she has long needed," Colonel Hancock reported joyfully, "an elegant room . . . where one can enjoy with lady company, the delicious ice cream and other delicacies of the season...." A "suit" of ice cream parlors had been opened by I. N. Hart in a building on Jefferson Street. 70

Dom Pedro, emperor of Brazil, passed through Americus at noon on June 30, 1876, in the course of a tour of the United States. A prankster spread word that he was arriving on the previous day, so stores were closed and business was neglected as the whole town turned out to see the royal personage. Subsequently the Republican carried a picture of a revolver and a cutline which said that many an irate citizen would like to use that item on the culprit. 71

In an effort to arouse civic pride, the tireless Editor wrote,

"As money is scarce and hogs are plentiful, we beg permission to suggest to the honorable City Council, the propriety of passing an Ordinance prohibiting hogs from running about the streets, and fining all owners who will not put them up...." 72

"Our streets are infested by a class of very small boys who use very indecent language and especially big cuss words. They smoke cigars, chew tobacco, drink whiskey, and play cards...." Here, it was said, was a case where parents foolishly pampered children from birth and encouraged them to be no good. 73

"We desire to call the attention of the Honorable Board of Commissioners of Sumter County to the delapidated condition of the fence around the Court-house, and the filthy condition of the enclosure. Every day large numbers of cows may be seen there grazing over the yard, and at night they make it their resting place. It is becoming to be a regular cow pen, and if the gates are not put in order to keep cows and other stock out of the enclosure, the place will become too filthy for the officers to remain in their offices with any degree of comfort." 74

In response to a proposal by several merchants that local stores should not remain open after six o'clock in the afternoon, Colonel Hancock readily concurred. It was a good idea, he said, because the clerks needed the evening hours for rest, exercise, and improving their minds. He brashly recommended later openings, too, "....for little trading (if any) is done by the citizens before the hour of 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning." 75

The Republican's four pages customarily were crowded with news of local happenings, texts of speeches delivered by national figures, frequent reports of the most trivial activities of European royalty, and advertisements of local merchants. The latter appeared on the front page just as often as they were seen elsewhere.

The advertisements of two educational institutions appeared regularly. Washington College at Lexington, Virginia, of which General Robert E. Lee was president, advertised that prospective students would find that "necessary expenses need not exceed \$325 per annum." 76 Rylander Male Academy, a widely known local institution, advertised two rates of tuition: Common English branches, four dollars; Higher Mathematics, Natural Sciences and the Classics, five dollars. In addition, there was an Incidental Fee of fifty cents per term. The academy occupied a building on the west side of Rees Park. 77 W. W. Kennedy was principal and C. H. Wooten was his assistant.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The cause of education was advanced on February 13, 1873, when the General Assembly passed an act authorizing the establishment of a public school system in Americus. The bill was introduced by twenty-four year old Representative Allen Fort of Americus. 78

The charter members of the Board of Education were: Dr. George F. Cooper, president; Colonel Allen S. Cutts, vice-president; Major M. Speer, treasurer; P. F. Brown, M. Callaway, Judge James M. Clark, T. M. Furlow, U. B. Harrold, S. H. Hawkins, G. W. Sirrine, the Reverend J. S. White, the Reverend A. M. Wynne, and Mayor Hiram French (ex-officio). 79

Under the leadership of Dr. Cooper, to whom history accords the distinction of being the founder of the local system of free schools, plans were rapidly formulated for making an education available to all children. Due to the strong opposition of certain influential taxpayers, however, it was seven years before the first public school opened its doors. 80--

Sumter County's school system was created a year earlier than that of Americus. The board of education was organized in 1872 as the Poor School Commissioners.81 Its first members, elected by a superior court grand jury, were: William A. Wilson, George W. Patterson, C. W. Hand, C. A. Crittenden and S. T. Feagin. At a meeting held on the first Tuesday in May, Captain Patterson was chosen president and Mr. Wilson was chosen secretary and county commissioner. The former removed from the county at the close of the year and was succeeded by Mr. Feagin, while George R. Harper was elected to fill the vacany on the board. 82

In speaking of the primitive conditions under which the county's boys and girls studied in the early days, a contemporary educator later recalled that they"....attended school in a building in which they were taught botany through the floor, geography through the walls and astronomy through the roof." The school usually consisted of one room in which the master taught all subjects to a group so diverse as to include the tiniest tots and twenty - year - old plowboys. Classroom activity consisted of lessons recited by rote and exercises done on squeaking slate blackboards. 83

On July 7, 1870, some seventy-five citizens assembled at Americus' city hall for the purpose of organizing a volunteer fire company. The following officers were chosen: Foreman - R. P. Tondee, First Assistant Foreman - H. H. Allen, Second Assistant foreman - W. N. Freeman, Hose Director - H. H. Martin, Assistant Hose Director - George Stapleton, Engineer - James Road, Assistant Engineer - W. J. Harper, Surgeon - Dr. J. B. Hinkle, Treasurer - R. C. Black, Secretary - M. B. Council, and Assistant Secretary - H. D. Randall. 84

Early in 1872 Americus acquired its eighth mayor when popular Colonel

A. S. Cutts assumed office.⁸⁵ Previous mayors, in the order of their service, had been P. H. Oliver, Thomas Sullivan, N. A. Smith, T. M. Furlow, William Sirrine, R. C. Black, and H. L. French.⁸⁶

In that same year, on June 26, a group of local Negroes organized St. John's Lodge No. 17, F. & A. M. The guiding spirits in its establishment were Charles A. Bradwell, George H. Dwelle, Elbert Head, Dennis J. Sheppard, Mitchell Ellis, James Ellis and Jasper Jones.⁸⁷

Shortly after President Grant's second inauguration, in 1873, he appointed Benjamin F. Bell to succeed Mr. Barwald as postmaster in Americus. The post office later was moved to a new location on North Jackson Street. When Rutherford B. Hayes became President in 1876, he appointed Captain Alfred C. Bell to succeed Benjamin F. Bell.⁸⁸

In 1874 Furlow Masonic Female College obtained a new president in the person of W. B. Seals, former president of a Baptist College at Cuthbert. He succeeded Dr. S. T. Douglass, who resigned to open a school for young ladies.⁸⁹

The college exerted an increasingly important influence in the community. It attracted considerable attendance by activities designed to stimulate and entertain young and old alike. For example, local citizens proposed that a spelling match be held in an effort to help them to forget croquet and be more intellectual like some neighboring cities. Accordingly twenty-five boys from the male academy met an equal number of girls from the college and had a spirited session in the presence of a large group of spectators. The winner was Miss Alice Hand, who received a book as a prize.⁹⁰

In later issues the Republican reported on various activities of the annual student Exhibition. "On Monday morning," it stated, "the elite of our city assembled at College Chapel to witness the exercises of the first annual celebration of the Polymnian Literary Society." That afternoon the Prize Exhibition was held by members of the sophomore class, while that evening Captain James R. McCleskey delivered the annual art lecture. On the latter occasion seventy-six examples of student art were exhibited, the most outstanding being oil paintings by Miss Mary Ansley, Miss Callie Rylander, and Miss E. Rylander; pencil sketches by Miss Mary Ansley, Miss Annie Ansley, and Miss Minnie Hinton, and colored crayon drawings by the Misses Rylander.⁹¹

"(On) Tuesday morning a large and brilliant audience assembled at the Chapel to hear the essays of a portion of the juniors...." Among the participants were (with subject of essay):

Miss Sallie Matthews, Marion County -- Cheerfulness
 Miss Annie Lou Hawkins, Sumter Co. -- Laughing

Miss Anna Davenport, Sumter County -- I Bring Thee an Ivy Leaf
 Miss Nellie Douglass, Sumter County -- Together
 Miss Nettie Sheffield, Sumter County -- The Mail Bag 92

On Wednesday morning came the reading of compositions by nine young ladies. Miss Sallie Taylor's The Trumpet was most enthusiastically received. That evening Professor Carl Schneider, the recently-arrived German music master, presented his first local concert. Noteworthy solos were rendered by Miss Laura Johnson (Judith), Mrs. DeJarnette (Wild Flowers), and Miss Carrie Morgan (Scena and Prayer). The orchestra was composed of Miss Alice Hand and Miss Nettie Sheffield, first piano; Miss Sallie Long and Miss Ellen Guerry, second piano; Miss Jennie Evans and Miss Rosa Haynes, third piano; Miss Alice Tomlinson and Miss Lula Maxwell, fourth piano; Miss Lucy Key, organ; Miss Carrie Rylander, second organ; Mr. James Fricker, first violin; Mr. Reish, second violin; Mr. S. A. Fogle, first flute; Mr. John T. Palmer, first cornet; Mr. Chas. Cohen, "Double" bass violin; Professor Schneider, bull harmonica; Mr. Henry Cohen, first guitar; Miss Annie Lou Hawkins, bass drum, and Miss Birdie Little, cymbals. 93

On Thursday morning the graduation exercises were held, with Miss Ellen Guerry, of Americus, delivering the Salutatory and Miss Sallie Long, of Monroe County, delivering the Valedictory. When the Honorable Alexander H. Stephens was unable to arrive to make the principal address of the occasion, Colonel C. W. Hubner, of Atlanta, substituted for him. The final act of the week took place at City Hall that evening when a capacity audience heard the young ladies sing an oratorio entitled Daniel, Or The Captivity. 94

The education scene was enhanced in 1876 by the addition of a new classical school for young men and boys, which was opened by Professor L. H. Carter in Wilson's Academy, located at the "northeast corner of Reese's Park." 95

Rylander Academy opened for the Spring term under the management of "Captain George W. Patterson, [who] is well know throughout this section as an excellent teacher and good disciplinarian, and his assistant, Mr. Windsor, [who] comes to us highly recommended. 96

At about the same time, an agitated controversy was precipitated by several citizens who advocated that "our so-called college" should be enhanced in prestige. They suggested that the various male and female academies should be combined to form a really top-rank high school. No action was taken in this direction at once, but the idea had been firmly implanted in the minds of the more progressive citizens. 97

FIRST BANK

Early in 1870 The First National Bank of Americus was organized under the guidance of Francis M. Coker, a native of Elbert County. It was the first bank in southwest Georgia to be organized under the provisions of the National Banking Act. Mr. Coker served as president until February, 1873, when he moved to Atlanta to become president of the Bank of the State of Georgia. ⁹⁸

Another bank, the Bank of Americus, was started in 1872 by S. H. Hawkins and a group of associates with a capitalization of \$150, 000. Mr. Hawkins was named president of the new institution.⁹⁹ The board of directors was composed of Dr. W. W. Barlow, Colonel W. T. Davenport, William Hooks, J. W. Furlow and the president. ¹⁰⁰

As Americus neared the end of its first decade following the Civil War its citizens could look about their little town with pardonable pride. It was only forty years since the first hardy pioneers arrived, yet in that brief span of time the crude village had become an attractive, progressive community and the business center for a large trade area.

In 1874 the omniscient editor of the Republican described the business area of the town as follows:

On the North side of the Public Square were situated the store of Sheffield & Company (hardware), a drug store, a confectionary, a grocery house, the Old Hotel (then decaying, soon to be demolished), and others.

On the East side of the Square were located the French House (Mrs. Ragland, proprietor), Price Warehouse (former site of carriage manufactory of Sirrine & Son), John E. Hall's "Exchange" (former stand of Jesse Hardy), and Rotton Row, ("which seems to be on the way out, with all this modernizing.")

On the West side of the square were T. Wheatley's store (on the southwest corner of Forsyth and Jackson streets) and the Barlow House, these two being part of a solid brick front from corner to corner.

Other establishments in the business district were "the elegant new emporium of Schumpert, Pickett & King (groceries and plantation supplies), which stands at the head of Cotton Avenue; at the entrance of the street on either corner stand the spacious dry goods stores of Waxelbaum & Gyles, and Felder & Son. . . . next comes the large furniture house of S. Anthony & Sons. . . . and farther on numerous business houses, with the Bank of Americus, and banking house of Wheatley & Co., and on the other side dry goods and provisions stores, confectioneries and green grocers, business offices and warehouses. . . ." Close by were the Grange Warehouse and the splendid and spacious establishment of Harrold, Johnson & Company - both cotton firms.

On Forsyth Street were located the First National Bank of Americus, the new block occupied by Montgomery & Shaw, and J. J. Smith & Company. Above the provision stores of Buchanan & Brother and Stewart & Stapleton, and directly opposite the warehouse of Harrold, Johnson & Company was the well-equipped printing establishment of the Sumter Republican.

"Other popular firms [are] on this street," the editor continued. "Buyers have long since found them out. . . . particularly those whose names appear in our advertising columns." ¹⁰¹

As the business life of Americus expanded and the population of the town increased, its churches experienced a corresponding growth. In 1874 the Bethel Baptist Church moved from Cotton Avenue, at the point where Forsyth Street intersects, to a new edifice on the southwest corner of Church and Forrest streets. The pastor at that time was the Reverend A. B. Campbell. Previous pastors, in the order of their service, were the Reverends H. D. Hornady (—1860), G. F. Cooper (1860-'61), W. W. Chadion (1861-'62), G. F. Welborn (1862-'65), and G. F. Cooper (1865-'74).¹⁰²

In 1875 the Methodists were hosts to the South Georgia Methodist Conference. A highly successful series of services and business meetings was held under the direction of the presiding bishop, the Reverend Mr. Doggett. The Reverend T. T. Christian was minister of the local church at that time. ¹⁰³

Calvary Episcopal Church acquired a new rector on January 15, 1874, when the Reverend Frank Hallam arrived to fill the vacancy left by the departure of the Reverend Thomas Boone. The latter, who was the church's first full-time rector, served from December 7, 1871, to May 1, 1873.¹⁰⁴

In January, 1876, the following city officers were elected at a meeting of the city council:

Marshal	--	W. W. Stovall
Policemen	--	T. A. Tiner, W. F. Oliver, J. L. Oliver, J. H. Brake
Sexton, Oak Grove	--	William Hames
Sexton, Colored Cemetery	--	Alf. Smith
Lamp Lighter	--	Clark Comer
Street Overseer	--	H. S. Mitchell
Bridge Keeper	--	W. J. Cox
Clock Keeper	--	James Fricker ¹⁰⁵

Annual salaries of city officials were fixed as follows: mayor, \$600 (reduced \$100); marshal, \$850 (perquisites to be divided); policemen, \$650 (to furnish own uniforms); bridge keeper, \$240 (bond of \$500); Oak Grove Sexton, \$400; Colored Cemetery Sexton, \$200; lamp lighter, \$150; clerk and treasurer, \$600 (with perquisites); clock keeper, \$50. ¹⁰⁶

MEN OF MARK

As Americus went about the business of living under the ever-watchful eye of the occupying Federal commander, it nevertheless recorded a fair measure of progress. This was due to the combined efforts of long-time residents and a group of enthusiastic and energetic newcomers.

Among the new arrivals who soon occupied positions of prominence was William Lawson Peel, a Webster County ploughboy who arrived in 1869 to work as a clerk in a local grocery store. A few years later, having been offered a job with the Bank of Americus, he spent several months studying at a business school in Atlanta. From the time of his return, he was one of the most popular and respected young men in town. In 1876 Mr. Peel resigned as cashier of the bank and moved to Atlanta, where he accepted a similar position with F. M. Coker's Bank of the State of Georgia. His success in Atlanta's business, civic and social circles was phenomenal and he came to be regarded as one of the capital's most outstanding and beloved citizens.¹⁰⁷

Mr. Peel's wife, whom he married in Washington in 1874, was the former Miss Lucy Marion Cook. Her father was the brilliant Civil War leader, General Philip Cook, who had moved to Americus in 1870 and entered the practice of law. He was elected to Congress in 1873.¹⁰⁸

Another young man who arrived from Webster County and who remained to become one of Americus' most influential citizens was John Windsor. He was born on April 24, 1847, one of the thirteen children of Alexander Windsor, a farmer, and his wife, the former Miss Harriett Terry. When only seventeen years of age, he enlisted as a private soldier in Company F, Third Georgia Reserves. In 1870 he moved to Americus as a clerk for Harrold, Johnson & Company, where he remained until 1875, at which time he assumed the management of Dr. W. W. Barlow's extensive holdings. On April 24, 1870, Mr. Windsor married Miss Emily Lester, daughter of Alfred and Amelia (Barlow) Lester of Sumter County. Their children were Lester, Hattie and Callie Windsor.¹⁰⁹

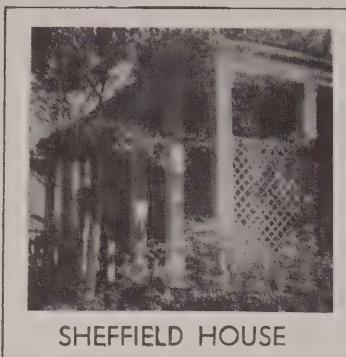
In 1872 Americus acquired a new citizen who was destined to become its most distinguished resident. His name was Charles Frederick Crisp and he arrived from his five-hundred acre farm near Ellaville to become solicitor general of the Southwestern judicial circuit. A native of Sheffield, England, he was born on January 29, 1845. His parents were Mr. and Mrs. William Henry Crisp, both of whom were noted Shakespearean actors. They were on a theatrical tour of the British Isles at the time of the son's birth. When he was still a small boy, they returned to the United States and, after several successful theatrical tours, settled in Atlanta. There the parents held sway as the South's most distinguished Thespians. They established their home at Ellaville during the war.¹¹⁰

Charles F. Crisp served as a lieutenant in command of Company K,

10th Virginia Infantry, in the Civil War. He was captured at Spottsylvania and spent thirteen months in prison. Returning to Ellaville after the war ended, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1866. His wife was the former Miss Clara Burton of Ellaville.¹¹¹

In 1872 there arrived upon the local scene a young man who was to become one of the town's business leaders. John West Sheffield came to Americus from Thomasville, where he had owned a partnership in a general merchantile business. He and Charles A. Huntington organized the Sheffield - Huntington Company and set about to become the area's largest wholesale and retail dealers in hardware and agricultural implements.¹¹²

Mr. Sheffield was born in Camden County, Ga., on November 4, 1831, one of the eight children of Bryant and Elizabeth (Ogden) Sheffield. He was reared near White Sulphur Springs, Florida and served in the Merchant Marine during the



SHEFFIELD HOUSE

Civil War. His wife, whom he married on December 15, 1858, was the former Miss Sarah A. Davis, the daughter of Enos and Temperance (Hardison) Davis of Washington County, Georgia.

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J. W. Sheffield was the founder of a family which has played an active role in the civic, religious, business and social life of Americus for more than three-quarters of a century. He was not, however, the first of the name in the area. His great-great-uncle, Robert Sheffield, had settled on a farm twelve miles from Americus in 1842 and there reared a large family.¹¹⁴

Among other new residents of Americus were Dr. W. A. Rembert and his partner, Dr. Mason, who arrived in 1875;¹¹⁵ Benjamin P. Hollis, attorney, first honor graduate of the state university in 1867 and a brother of Mrs. James Simmons of Americus,¹¹⁶ and Judge Seab Montgomery, a pioneer resident who returned after living in Pond Town since 1838.¹¹⁷

In 1876 Uriah B. Harrold set out a large number of shade trees along several of the town's prominent streets. These replaced trees which his father-in-law, Dr. Jacob Fogle, had set out several years earlier and which had not survived.¹¹⁸ A few of those striplings remain to this day, chiefly on West College Street, where they provide a majestic canopy of leafy coolness on hot summer days.

In April, 1876, the Democratic Party of Sumter appointed the following delegates to the Third Congressional District convention in Macon, where delegates to the National Democratic convention in St. Louis were chosen: N. A. Smith, Dr. J. B. Hinkle, J. H. Black and Dr. J. M. R. Westbrook. Alternates chosen were: J. B. Felder, E. G. Simmons, B. B. Dykes, and

S. G. Pryor.¹¹⁹ Colonel W. A. Hawkins was chairman of the Democratic group in Sumter and B. P. Hollis was its secretary. 120

New officers of the Sumter County Bible Society, chosen at that organization's fifth annual meeting, were J. A. Ansley, president; J. W. Wheatley, secretary, and O. P. Tommey, treasurer.¹²¹

One of the most elaborate social entertainments since the war ended took place in 1876. In celebration of the first centennial of the country's independence, Mrs. L. F. W. Andrews was hostess at a bal masque which was pronounced "a decided success."¹²² If it accomplished nothing else, such an affair would seem to indicate a diminution of hatred for the Federal Government.

Social life in the 'Seventies centered around weddings, an increasing number of which were held as the younger men began to recover from the financial setbacks inflicted by the recent war. Among the couples taking their vows were Miss Florence Davenport, daughter of Colonel W. T. Davenport, and Benjamin P. Hollis; Miss Emma Patterson, daughter of Colonel G. W. Patterson, and Captain W. H. Morgan; Miss Mary E. Sullivan and George W. Glover and Miss Mary Fannie Davenport, daughter of Colonel W. T. Davenport, and Dupont Guerry, son of William Guerry.

The year 1876 was a momentous one for Americus: it marked the withdrawal of Federal troops. This occurred immediately following the national elections. Local citizens rejoiced with hundreds of thousands of other Southerners. Reconstruction was ended.

In the turbulent years since 1865, Americus had grown and begun to prosper once again. It was already acquiring some of the characteristics of a small city and was beginning to lose some of its village provincialism. Looking back upon eleven years in which the insufferable Yankee had always been underfoot, some citizens decided that the situation had never been so bad as the hot-heads would have one believe. At any rate, those days were gone and now everyone could concentrate upon future progress.

But whatever progress would be made in the years ahead would have to be accomplished without the assistance of some of Americus' leading citizens. The veil of death had lifted to admit them and their going left a great void in the community.

Perhaps no man of the period was mourned more widely than was Colonel Charles T. Goode, a brilliant lawyer and "silver-tongued orator," who died in 1875. A native of Upson County (born 1834), and a graduate of the state university (1853), he had married a daughter of General Eli Warren of Houston County. After serving as colonel of the 10th Confederate Cavalry, he entered the practice of law in Americus. Subsequently he was a member of the great Constitutional Convention of 1865-66 and.

in 1871, he was elected to the legislature to fill the unexpired term of Wright Brady. He was buried in Perry.¹²³

Some months following Colonel Goode's death, the town was shocked at news of the suicide in Atlanta of Captain Hiram L. French, popular former mayor. He left a letter in which he avowed his love for a certain young woman, who, in turn, said the Captain killed himself because of the violent antipathy toward their proposed marriage that had been expressed by his daughter, Mrs. Ida Eason of Americus. A native of New York, Captain French had been a prominent citizen of Schley County before the war, in which he served as captain of the Schley Guards. His wife, the former Miss Emily Hunt of Oglethorpe County, had died in 1873; their only son was killed in the war. Captain French was said to have been "universally popular and highly esteemed." Both he and Mrs. French were buried in Ellaville.¹²⁴

Two deaths in 1876 are worthy of special mention. One of these removed from the local scene Dr. Albert Rees, a good and kindly man who was beloved of young and old alike. It was he who gave the town the lovely park at the eastern terminus of Taylor Street, a gently rolling tract which bears his name.¹²⁵

The other death was that of Mrs. Elizabeth (Logan) Coker, whose tombstone is of unusual interest. Her grieving widower had the following inscription carved on the tall marker over her grave:

"She was a devoted, kind and affectionate wife and mother, a woman without hypocrisy or deception. But every man, plant and animal is furnished food, life and vigor and the earth its soil, and the soul is a function produced by impressions made on the brain by the five senses through the nerves, and at death ceases to exist, and like all other functions, all organizations must disorganize and all compounds must decompose.

"Hence my dear Lizzie and babies, adieu, and although I may wander in distant lands, I shall oft times think and shed for you pensively tears of love and affection. C. W. Coker."¹²⁶

Chapter VI

THE FIRST FREE YEARS

(1877 - 1882)

The removal of Federal troops made no appreciable difference in the lives of the people of Americus. Except for those persons who were able to return to homes which had been occupied by the military, little note was taken of their departure. The town was too busy to give more than a sigh of relief, for it was feverishly plotting ways by which it could grow and prosper.

In the first free years, organizations of every description flourished. Some lasted hardly beyond the first meeting, but a few remained long enough to become potent influences in the life of the community.

The Jacksonian Debating Society was active for a number of years and apparently it was mildly successful in stimulating intellectual activities. Officers chosen to guide the organization in 1877 were Lewis Burgen, president; E. M. Rogers, vice president; C. W. Lamar, secretary; J. M. Hay, treasurer, and J. G. Edmondson, censor.¹

Volunteer military units and the men who commanded them in this period were:

Americus Volunteer Rifles (Inf.)	--	J. R. McCleskey, Captain, Americus
Sumter Light Guards (Inf.)	--	J. F. Pickett, Captain, Americus
Eureka Cavalry	--	W. A. Sales, Captain, Americus
Stonewall Cavalry	--	B. P. Hollis, Captain, Americus
City Blues (Negro)	--	E. Ansley, Captain, Americus ²

The Merchants' Protective Association was formed late in 1877 for the purpose of affording "protection against that class of persons who do not pay their debts." It was reported that an intelligent and trusty agent had canvassed surrounding counties and that, as a result, he had complete information on the standing of every person in the trade territory.³

The most important new organization of the 'Seventies was the Americus Library Association, which came into being at a meeting held in the law office of Merrel Callaway on January 11, 1878. The Reverend Mr. Wharton was elected temporary president and Sam C. Cooper was elected temporary secretary. B. P. Hollis moved that Dr. E. J. Eldridge be elected to serve as president at the next meeting, but the good doctor "declined on account of inability to leave home after supper." Judge Charles F. Crisp was then unanimously elected president of the next meeting.⁴

At the Association's second meeting two weeks later, a committee previously appointed submitted a constitution and by-laws. It provided for a president, two vice presidents, a secretary, a treasurer and nine directors to serve for a period of one year. An initiation fee of five dollars and quarterly dues of one dollar were provided. Privileges of the library were restricted to members and their invited guests, but the founders expressed a desire that the organization might eventually become a public library.⁵

Permanent officers elected at the second meeting were:

President	--	Thornton Wheatley
Vice presidents	--	E. J. Eldridge, C. W. Hancock
Secretary	--	James Fricker
Treasurer	--	W. J. Dibble

The following gentlemen were name directors: Allen Fort, D. C. N. Burkhalter, W. P. Burt, B. F. Bell, J. J. Granberry, C. M. Wheatley, F. A. Gyles, A. Hirsch, and John E. Hall.⁶

The Library Association established its quarters in two rooms which M. Speer provided rent-free for one year.⁷ Its first large contribution consisted of one hundred and fifty volumes of miscellaneous works, the gift of General Philip Cook.⁸

The first of a series of lectures sponsored by the organization was delivered in College Chapel in the middle of February, 1878. General Alpheus Baker, of Eufaula, Alabama, spoke on "The Southern Pocahontas," after which he recited an Irish verse entitled "Shamus O'Brien." During the evening the Orion Club Orchestra, under the leadership of Professor Carl Schneider, presented a program of musical selections.⁹

In the next year, as plans were underway to construct a permanent home for the library, various activities were held in an effort to raise money for the venture. One of these assembled "one of the largest and most appreciative audiences we have seen in this place in a long time... to witness the first exhibition given by the Americus Library Amateur Club. The play presented was Blackstone's splendid English comedy, Married Life...."¹⁰ A week later six hundred enthusiastic supporters journeyed to Albany by train (round trip fare: \$1) to see the play presented there and also to see Albany's new library.¹¹

The year 1879 began with the traditional New Year's receptions. The Republican reported that they were on a grand scale and remarked that nearly every society gentleman was out that evening, leaving his card at a number of houses. Among the people receiving were: W. D. Haynes, Church Street; Colonel W. A. Hawkins, Church Street; Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Simmons, Church Street; Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Kendrick, Lamar Street; Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Barlow, Leeton; Mr. and Mrs. William Hooks, Lee

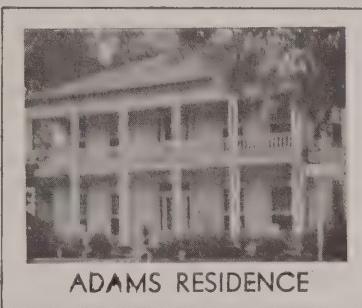
Street; Mrs. Alfred Lester, Felder Street; Dr. and Mrs. E. J. Eldridge, Lee Street; J. N. Seymour, Brown Street; J. A. Pugh, Church Street; Colonel P. F. Brown, Forrest Street; Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Wheatley, College Street; Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Dibble, College Street; Mrs. Amanda Shiver, Jackson Street, and Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Hancock, College St.¹²

A visitor to the town in this year later described it as a "prosperous little city.....having a population of thirty-five hundred, and surrounded by a fertile country. This is a pretty city, with a refined and intelligent population...."¹³

A new resident, Miss Minnie C. Hinton, subsequently recalled in detail the names of the families living along Church Street at the time. With her parents, Judge and Mrs. B. B. Hinton, she arrived from Buena Vista in 1878 and moved into the former Blanche home on the southwest corner of Church and Hampton streets.¹⁴

Living west of them, on the north side of the street, she wrote, were Colonel Edgar Simmons, the Barretts, the Cokers, and W. D. Haynes; across Hampton, James Fricker, J. W. Harper, and Moses Speer; across Jackson was a vacant lot and next to it, on the corner of Lee, was the home of Mrs. Crogan; across Lee was a vacant lot which adjoined Mims' store on Lee, then the home of Dr. J. J. W. Ford and, on the corner of Prince, a house occupied by the Hare family; across Prince was Dr. Sion Hawkins' house and, farther out, the Oliver home. The street terminated at the intersection of Brown, where there was a virgin forest of oak, hickory and pine trees. Mrs. Mary Brown, widow of Judge Edwin R. Brown and grandmother of W. E. Brown, owned the forest and live in a house on the south-east corner of Church and Brown streets.¹⁵

On the south side of Church Street, Miss Hinton's narrative continued, beginning west of its intersection with Hampton Street, lived Postmaster Frank Bell, Robert Oliver, and Judge Hinton; across Hampton, Colonel Willis A. Hawkins, and, on the corner of Forrest, was the Baptist church; across Forrest lived Mrs. M. T. Elam, and on the corner of Jackson was Mrs. Raines' house; across Jackson, A. A. Adams on the corner, and on the corner of Lee, Mrs. Martha Huling; across Lee was the Methodist church and



next to it lived A. P. Lingo and J. A. Pugh; Dr. Abner Hudson lived farther out, and on the southwest corner of Church and Brown was the home of Mrs. Adaline Brown, mother of W. E. Brown..
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On Hampton Street were the homes of B. P. Hollis, J. A. Kendrick, Merrel Callaway and (on the southeast corner of Lamar, which street it faced) Thornton Wheatley. On the northwest corner of Lamar and Hampton

was the two-story columned home of J. W. Sheffield (later owned by T. H. McGillis), and nearby were the homes of Dr. James Fort, the Dudleys and the Byrds.¹⁷ A few of these houses still stand, shabbily and aloofly resisting the encroachment of the business district.

In August, 1879, Furlow Masonic Female College acquired a new president in the person of R. V. Forrester, of Dalton.¹⁸ He was the institution's last president and his tenure of office was destined to be brief, for the college ceased to exist at the end of the year.¹⁹

The Furlow building was turned over to the city for use as Americus' first public school. When the latter was opened in January, 1880, it represented an amalgamation of the various private institutions which had theretofore provided local boys and girls with their primary and secondary education. Included were Ryland Academy and the schools operated by Mrs. Amanda Shiver, Miss Mary Bethune, and Miss Rebecca Cowles.²⁰

The faculty of the first public school was composed of John Neely, superintendent; J. E. Mathis, principal of the high school; Mrs. D. J. DeJarnette, assistant in the high school; Mrs. Amanda Shiver, principal of the primary school, and Miss Ruth Brown, assistant in the primary school.²¹

Enrollment in the first year totaled three hundred and two pupils. The first commencement was held in 1881 and the pupils graduated at that time were: Misses Jennie L. Barlow, E. V. Hamil, Mattie E. Hawkins, Ella Hay (Valedictorian), Jackie Head, and Minnie C. Hinton, and Messrs. T. Bloom Brown and H. Ed Hare.²²

Schools for Negroes were inaugurated in the same year that the white school opened. They were housed in ten different churches, lodges and halls scattered over the town. Three hundred and eighty pupils were enrolled for the first year.²³

As the first free schools began operation, Dr. George F. Cooper, president of the Board of Education, announced that the Peabody Educational Fund had allocated a grant of eight hundred dollars for their use.²⁴

In the field of religious activity, Americus churches were briefly annoyed by the inattentiveness of certain of their worshippers. The Republican noted that the stewards of the Methodist church had obtained the names of young men who had been talking loudly in the auditorium and vestibule of the church during services. It warned that unless they desisted their names would be turned over to the grand jury.²⁵

Calvary Episcopal Church obtained the services of its fifth rector, in 1879, after a four-year period without a resident clergyman. The new man, the Reverend Theodore Reed, served only two years and two months. For the next two years John Neely served as lay reader, after which there was another two-year period in which the church had no permanent ordained

minister or lay leader. 26

In 1877 a group of Americus Negroes organized Campbell's Chapel and erected a small frame edifice on the northeast corner of Wild and North Jackson Streets. 27

At the State Convention in 1877, delegates from the Thirteenth District, of which Sumter County was then a part, were: A. H. Greer, J. C. Ellington, J. R. Respass, J. V. Scott, G. F. Cooper and T. M. Furlow. 28

In 1879 the district's senator was John N. Hudson and its representatives were W. H. Davidson and Allen Fort.

Officials of Sumter County in that year were: Thomas R. Stewart, ordinary; Joseph H. Allen, clerk; Joseph W. Mize, sheriff; James A Daniels, tax receiver; Sampson C. Glover, tax collector; Charles G. Sheppard, treasurer; Mitchell G. Logan, surveyor, and William W. Guerry, coroner. 29

Americus men figured prominently in state political activities of the period. Willis A. Hawkins and John A. Cobb were delegates to the gubernatorial convention of 1880. 30 Shortly thereafter, the former was appointed an associate justice of the State Supreme Court. A speedy impairment of his health was said to be the reason why he soon resigned and returned to the more congenial practice of law. 31

Charles F. Crisp, who had been appointed judge of the Southwestern Circuit in 1877 and had subsequently been returned to the bench in 1878 and 1880, resigned in 1882 in order to campaign for Philip Cook's seat in Congress, which convened in 1883.

gross. The latter had not offered for reelection. Crisp was elected and took his seat with the Forty-Eighth Congress, which convened in 1883. 32 Cook was one of five commissioners appointed by Governor Henry D. McDaniel in 1882 to superintend the erection of Georgia's new capitol. 33 Allen Fort succeeded Crisp on the bench of the Southwestern Circuit. 34

In 1882 Americus acquired a new postmaster when President Chester A. Arthur appointed Major William A. Black to succeed Captain Alfred C. Bell 35. Both men were Confederate veterans who were highly regarded in Americus. During his tenure of office, Captain Bell had established a daily mail route between Americus and Buena Vista via Ellaville. 36

City officials in that year were: J. B. Felder, mayor; D. K. Brinson, clerk and recorder; W. P. Burt, P. H. Williams, R. E. Cobb, L. B. Boxworth, H. D. Watts and W. J. Harper, aldermen; A. P. Lingo, marshal; W. W. Wheeler, Pat Erskine, J. W. Cobb and S. H. Mitchell, policemen; P. D. Hill, Oak Grove sexton; Richard Felder, Colored Cemetery sexton; J. P. Raiford, bridge keeper; W. P. Burt, fire chief, and J. C. Nicholson, assistant fire chief. 37

Officials of the volunteer fire companies were as follows:

Wide Awake No. 1 (Steamer)	--	W. M. Hawkes, foreman
Mechanics No. 2 (Steamer)	--	H. D. Watts, foreman
Vigilance No. 2	--	Mingo Glaze, foreman
Hook and Ladder	--	Henry Anderson, foreman

The Sumter Republican, for some years the sole reporter of local happenings, acquired competition in 1879 when Merrel Callaway established the Americus Recorder. The new paper, a tri-weekly of four pages, was published by Mr. Callaway with the assistance of J. R. Christian. Two years after its inauguration, it was sold to William L. Glessener. ³⁹

A young men's religious group was organized in 1882 for the purpose of assisting poor children, aged persons and indigent young men desirous of entering the ministry. Meetings were held at the Methodist church every Sunday afternoon. Officers of the group were: Claude Cutts, president; James Dunn, vice president, and Jo Davenport, secretary and treasurer. Special committees were composed of Lawson Stapleton, Lott Warren, James A. Davenport, J. L. Price, Oscar Ansley, Bennie Jossey, D. F. Davenport, L. T. Stallings, Charles Hardy, J. A. Miller and T. E. Davenport. ⁴⁰

Sportsmen of the era were wonderfully free of limitations upon the number of birds they might kill, as is attested by the following item from The Weekly Sumter Republican of February 21, 1879:

"On Friday last, Messrs. J. P. Chapman, M. B. Council, J. J. Murray, Tom Murray and Boze Morgan went birding, and killed three hundred and fifty partridges by 11 o'clock Saturday. This was pretty good, considering the windy weather we had on Friday and Saturday...."

In the latter 1870s when the Federal government began to improve the cemetery at Andersonville, the graves of Confederate soldiers who had died there in the Civil War were separated from the Union soldiers' graves by a brick wall and left in a neglected condition. The Ladies' Memorial Association of Americus spent some of its meager funds to have one hundred and fifteen Confederate bodies removed to Oak Grove Cemetery in 1880. Neat marble stones were placed at the head and foot of each grave, with the name of the soldier or "Unknown" inscribed thereon. ⁴¹

A year earlier, C. M. Wheatley had defrayed the cost of erecting a covered shed at the cemetery so that the speaker and distinguished guests at Memorial Day exercises would be sheltered from the elements. ⁴² This familiar landmark was pulled down in 1953.

A new business, the Americus Building and Loan Association, was chartered in 1880. Petitioners were: E. J. Eldridge, W. J. Dibble, L. B.

Bosworth, S. Montgomery, T. Wheatley, H. D. Watts, D. K. Brinson and others. 43

An established business changed hands when N. A. Harris and David James, of Marion County, and J. J. Williford, of Stewart County, bought the wholesale grocery house of D. C. N. Burkhalter. Mr. Williford was named president, Mr. Harris became secretary and treasurer, and Mr. James assumed the responsibilities of manager. 44

EMERGENCE OF COLONEL HAWKINS

In 1880 a controversy raged in the Republican's columns as the result of a letter written to the editor by one who signed himself "Tailer." The writer charged that S. H. Hawkins was urging the reelection of Governor Alfred H. Colquitt because Hawkins' Bank of Americus had \$30,000 of the state's money on deposit interest-free. This money, he stated, should be earning interest for the farmers and voters of Sumter and of Georgia; instead, Hawkins graciously loaned it to the public at a rate of two per cent a month. 45

Colonel Hawkins replied coolly,

"....'Mr. Tailer' is to be pitied if he really thinks one should pay interest on money which he is bound to pay on call.....As to how or for whom I may see proper to vote cannot be important to the public for I am only a private citizen...." 46

The colonel underestimated himself, however, for what he did was of interest to an increasingly large number of people. He was then attracting considerable attention by his continuous attacks upon the Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia for the "exorbitant" rates its Southwestern Division charged to move cotton and other freight. 47 Americus lost much cotton business to Columbus because of the high rates and the situation soon became critical for the businessmen of Americus. 48 In addition to assailing the freight rates, Colonel Hawkins went so far as to advocate the establishment of a state railroad commission to regulate them. The Central was furious. It retaliated by erasing the name of Americus from its system maps, substituting in its stead the designation "Way Station No. 9. In addition, it aided in building a road from Andersonville to Buena Vista and showed interest in a proposed line from Smithville to Preston. 49 Americus was in acute danger of being cut off permanently from the cotton business of nearby planters, and also of being completely by-passed by the main railroad line. The situation called for skillful diplomacy and forceful action.

Colonel Hawkins was chosen to head a group of citizens who planned to meet the challenge. He was an ideal choice. A native of Clinton, in Jones County, he was born on January 10, 1835, a son of Ezekial Hawkins, "a plain farmer." The family moved to Sumter County and he attended Dr. Ransom's school at Magnolia Springs. He completed his education by spending six months at Moss Hill Academy in Stewart County. There he

met Miss Cordelia Matthews, daughter of Marion County's wealthiest planter, William Matthews. There they were married in 1860. 50

Samuel Hugh Hawkins was admitted to the bar in 1857. He served as a lieutenant of cavalry in the Civil War, after which he settled in Americus as a law partner of Dupont Guerry and B. P. Hollis.51 His rise to prominence in law, banking, and civic affairs was rapid. He real eminence, however, was to come in the years ahead.

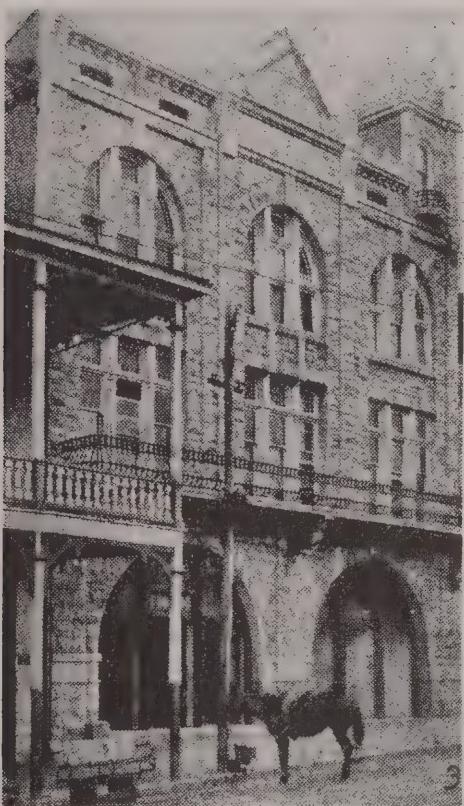
In 1882 Americus acquired a useful new citizen in the person of forty-three year old James Dodson, an attorney. He arrived from Leesburg, where he had practiced law for several years. Earlier he had taught school in Marion County and served as a soldier in the Confederate Army. His wife was the former Miss Georgia Murray. Mr. Dodson became one of Americus' best known attorneys and served several times as prosecuting attorney. 52

Another new resident was Joseph Josiah Williford, president of Williford, Harris & James. A native of Stewart County, where he was born on August 9, 1851, he was a son of John and Elizabeth (Burke) Williford. He attended Professor Grubbs' noted Moss Hill Academy and then devoted his attention to his plantation in Stewart County. Subsequently he acquired a plantation and other holdings in Sumter County and shortly thereafter he moved his family to Americus. His wife, whom he married on November 27, 1873, was the former Miss Lee Mildred Matthews, daughter of John L. and Frances (Herndon) Matthews of Marion County, and a niece of Mrs. S. H. Hawkins of Americus. They became the parents of Luther, Arthur, Vernon (Mrs. W. C. Hurt), Floyd (Mrs. W. D. Bailey), Claude, Josie Lee (Mrs. M. H. Hurt), Lois (Mrs. E. B. Hill), Willie (Mrs. R. E. Brake-man), and Frances (Mrs. W. F. Bailey). Mr. Williford's brother, Preston Brooks Williford, was for many years a well-known local realtor. 53

A prominent dentist of this period was Dr. Willis Perry Burt, who was born in Chambers County, Alabama, on September 6, 1842. He served with the Twelfth and Forty-Sixth Georgia regiments in the Civil War, after which he was graduated by Baltimore Dental College in 1867. He practiced in Talbotton for several years and then moved to Americus in 1871. His wife, whom he married on December 13, 1870, was the former Miss Kate Chapman of Talbotton. 54

A former Americus man was the object of much local interest in 1879. Reported the Republican on June 6:

"Dr. George Ezekial Thomas, a colored man who once belonged to Wm. Turpin, of Americus, is one of the greatest curiosities in the world. He has been exhibited in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, and has defied the most skillful physicians to solve the enigma he presents in his person. He can revolve his stomach backward and forward, let down another set of ribs and cover his stomach as with a coat of mail, throw his heart from its true position to his left and right hip, and at the same time keep up a volume flow of conversation.... He says Wm. Turpin bought him from Colonel Felder thirty odd years ago."



EARLY SCENES: (1) Methodist Church, erected 1845; (2) Second Sumter County Courthouse, erected 1847; (3) Forsyth Street Post Office, now remodeled by Bank of Commerce; (4) Furlow Masonic Female College, a portion of which is incorporated in the present Furlow Grammar School, (5) the Wide-Awake Fire Company, one of Americus' two volunteer units.

The third annual exhibition of the Americus Fair Association was held in the last week of October, 1879. President John A. Cobb announced that featured attractions would include bazaars, a driving contest, a trotting race, and a grand hop at the Barlow House. The latter affair, for which Professor Kesler's band provided the music, was later described as one of the most elegant and brilliant balls every held in Americus. It was arranged by a committee consisting of Messrs. O. V. Lamar, W. T. Stanfield, C. W. Felder, H. W. Edmundson, C. C. Clay, W. A. Hawkins, Jr., Stephen Popper and J. C. Roney.⁵⁵

Americus was host to two well-known men in 1882. One of them was distinguished for his accomplishments in the realm of government, and the other was noted for his ability as a writer and clever speaker. The former, Alexander H. Stephens, arrived by train on September 20 and was met by a group of prominent citizens and a brass band.⁵⁶ The latter, Major Charles H. Smith ("Bill Arp"), arrived on October 1.⁵⁷ Both men were in Americus to fill speaking engagements.

One of the most elaborate social functions of 1879 was the silver wedding reception at which Colonel and Mrs. A. S. Cutts entertained at their home on the corner of Church and Jackson Streets.⁵⁸ A similar affair was held in 1882 by Captain and Mrs. John R. Leamon at their home on College Hill.⁵⁹

Weddings continued to provide the favorite social diversion of Americus people. The following account is from The Weekly Republican of September 29, 1882:

"On last Tuesday morning, at the residence of the bride's father, Mr. T. W. Ansley, Miss Annie Ansley of this city, was united in marriage to Mr. Wm. Bailey, of Cuthbert, Rev. J. O. A. Cook officiating. The attendants were, Mr. Charley Ansley, of Americus, and Miss Gertrude Gunn, of Cuthbert; Mr. John Gunn, of Cuthbert, and Miss Leila Davenport, of Americus; Mr. Jo P. Davenport and Miss May Speer, of Americus. The groom and bride left on the same day for their home in Cuthbert. We return thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Ansley for a nice share of the wedding cake, and earnestly wish for the couple so happily united, all the joys that result from a happy married life."

One of the most beautiful weddings of this period was that of Miss Jennie Evans and J. G. Edmundson. The bride was the step-daughter of W. D. Haynes.⁶⁰ This marriage was solemnized at the Baptist Church, as was that of Miss Annie M. Bryan (daughter of the pastor) and L. A. DeGraf-fenreid, of Albany,⁶¹ and that of Miss Ida Walker and E. A. Cutts.⁶²

In 1879 difficulties developed between the city fathers and one of the Volunteer fire companies. In a mild reproof to the former, Wide Awake Fire Company No. 1 adopted a resolution which stated that the mayor and city council "....have by frequent and repeated ordinances shown a want of appreciation...." of the volunteers' services. Even with no appropriation from the city, however, the Wide Awake members stressed that their

fellow citizens would be protected from the fire fiend. 63

As a result of the Republican's continuous trumpeting of the need for an opera house, the town finally acquired one early in 1880. It was constructed by Harrold, Johnson & Company at a site on Forsyth Street. The Republican elatedly cried, "Three cheers for this live firm!" 64

The summer of 1879 brought a terrible drought which did much damage to crops throughout the county. A well known farmer, C. S. S. Horne, arrived from his acres at Scrambletown lamenting that the only sure crops were dogs and babies. He proposed that the legislature be asked to abate the former and pension the parents of the latter. 65

The people of Americus were startled when twenty-three local merchants agreed not to open their places of business on Christmas Day - albeit some agreed only conditionally. 66 This brought to mind the annoyance still felt by some citizens because the stores no longer opened before sunrise and remained open until ten o'clock at night. The city had recently agreed to pay the lamp lighter the sum of thirty-five dollars per month for lighting the town's fifty street lamps. 67 This, sniffed the critics, was a waste of money, inasmuch as a body couldn't shop after sundown anyhow!

As the year 1882 drew to a close, Americus and its residents could look back upon six years of progress since the departure of Federal troops. New businesses had been established, new houses constructed and new projects undertaken. Education was now available to all children of whatever race or creed; churches were expanding the scope of their influence; civic and charitable organizations were assisting the community's aged and indigent persons. An impressive number of new people had arrived to become useful citizens and ornaments to society.

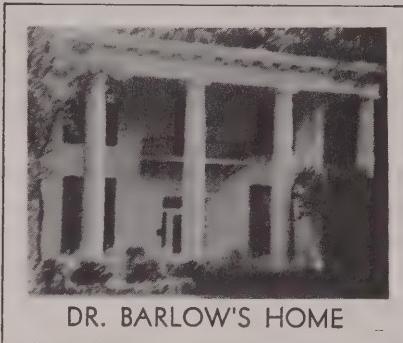
In this period as in all others, however, Americus could remember with sorrow the passing of some of its most outstanding residents.

The greatest loss to the community occurred on December 3, 1882, when Dr. George F. Cooper breathed his last. Brilliant of mind and accomplishment, distinguished as preacher, physician and educator, yet he retained the common touch and was beloved in every stratum of society. His death plunged the entire community into mourning. 68

Dr. Cooper was born on July 31, 1825, in Wilkes County. Following his graduation by the Medical College of Philadelphia in 1845, he moved to Americus and entered the private practice of medicine. An active member of the Baptist church, he commenced preaching in 1856 and subsequently spent five years in other communities. From 1861 to 1865 he was senior surgeon of General A. R. Lawton's brigade. He returned to Americus in 1866 as pastor of the Baptist Church and, except for a brief period as a private physician in 1875-76, remained in that capacity until 1879. In that year he resigned his pastorate and devoted the remainder of his life to the practice of medicine. He was the first president of the Board of Education and was regarded as the father of the Americus public school system. 69

Dr. Cooper's first wife, whom he married in 1846, was the former Miss Cornelia I. Staley, of Perry. His second wife, whom he married in 1878, was the former Miss Carrie M. Kendrick, daughter of Professor A. C. Kendrick of Rochester University and niece of Judson A. and Adolph D. Kendrick of Americus. The second wife survived him, as did six children. 70

The second giant to depart the local scene was Dr. W. W. Barlow, who died at his Taylor Street residence on January 7, 1879. He was born on September 24, 1811, and had been a resident of Americus for more than forty years. A successful business man possessed of great wealth, he was regarded as a con-



scientious physician and a faithful emissary to various state political conventions. He was an original director of the Bank of Americus and had served as Sumter County's representative to the General Assembly. 71

Dr. Barlow was twice married. His first wife was the former Miss Amanda Allen, daughter of Eason Allen of Americus; she died in 1859. 72 His second wife, whom he married in 1863, was the former Elizabeth Jarrett Gaither. 73 She was his only immediate survivor. 74

Another Americus figure who died in this period was the Reverend Samuel Anthony, local furniture dealer and noted Methodist divine. He died in 1880 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Martha Huling, aged seventy-two years. He was twice married, but both of his wives pre-deceased him. In speaking of Mr. Anthony's death, The Columbus Enquirer-Sun said in part:

"Although his early life was not favored with many educational advantages, yet he soon attained a high position in ministerial ranks. There was a sanctity in his life and character.... Mr. Anthony will not be rated as one of the great men of our time, yet, ... he has not lived in vain.. " 75

Two of Americus' most widely loved women answered the final call in this period. On January 13, 1878, Mrs. J. J. Granberry died and the Republican stated that, "Perhaps the death of no one in this section ever cast a deeper gloom over the community or caused a more universal regret..." 76 On May 31, 1879, Mrs. Emma Eldridge, first wife of Dr. E. J. Eldridge, succumbed and the Republican noted that "everybody loved her." 77 Both women were active church workers, Mrs. Granberry in the Methodist Church and Mrs. Eldridge in the Episcopal Church.

Major Mathew E. Rylander, founder of a useful local family, died on January 3, 1880. A native of Effingham County, where he was born on April 18, 1808, he was a founder of Wesleyan College and had been a resident of Americus since 1855. Among his children were Anna, Emma, Eunice, Joseph A. B. and Major John Emory Rylander, and among his grandchildren was the late Arthur Rylander. 78

Chapter VII

BIG MEN - BIG DREAMS

(1883 - 1893)

In 1883 Americus entered upon the fifth decade of its existence. The ensuing ten years were to be, in many ways, the most important years in its history. In the brief span of one decade the town was to achieve new growth, greater prosperity and a measure of renown. It also was to suffer because of external economic factors beyond its control and because of the misguided business judgement and personal unscrupulousness of certain of its prominent men. In the end, as it teetered dangerously upon the brink of economic chaos, Americus was to regard with pride several of its leaders who had demonstrated unusual vision and business acumen, and still others whose sterling integrity was to be a shining symbol of all that was best in its citizens.

As the year began, the railroad situation was uppermost in the minds of the people of Americus and Sumter County. The freight embargo had had a paralyzing effect upon business in general, and the planters in particular were desperately searching for a way by which they could dispose of their tremendous backlog of cotton.

Under the leadership of Colonel S. H. Hawkins, a committee of local men went to Savannah in an effort to persuade the Central to divert the terminus of the Preston & Smithville railroad from Smithville to Americus. The Central's management consented for the terminal question to be referred to the local directors of the Preston and Smithville road. U. B. Harrold and the other directors then agreed for the road to come to Americus.¹

Accordingly, the Americus, Preston and Lumpkin Railroad Company was chartered on June 17, 1884, to construct and operate a narrow-gauge railroad from Americus to Lumpkin.² The organization was effected at a meeting of the stockholders on June 26,³ at which Colonel Hawkins was chosen president. The other officials, as well as the stockholders themselves, were leading citizens of Sumter, Stewart and Webster counties.⁴

Construction commenced immediately and early in the next year the tracks were opened to the present town of Plains. This community of some two hundred persons had been founded as The Plains of Dura when a post office was established in the store of Arthur Turner.⁵ When the AP&L passed nearby, the village was moved to a new site near the farm of Milton Hudson so it could enjoy the advantages afforded by the railroad. Its name was shortened to Plains at that time.⁶ The village has long been the home of such sturdy citizens as the Catos, the Olivers, the Chappells, the Carters, the Wises and others.

Americus acquired a new business in 1883 when two local men organized the Georgia Warehouse. Reported the Republican:

"Messrs. M. B. Council and J. J. Williford, we learn, have leased the Glover & Perry warehouse to be built on the (northeast) corner of Forsyth and Troup streets this summer, and are making preparations for a huge haul on the cotton receipts of the next season. They are well known gentlemen who stand high in the esteem of the cotton growers of this section and will do a paying business."⁷

Malcolm Blue Council, the first named of the partners, had been a resident of Sumter County since 1842. He was born in Cumberland County, North Carolina, on June 26, 1838, a son of Solomon and Elizabeth (Blue) Council. He served four years in the Confederate army, after which he was for a number of years an overseer on the extensive plantation of Captain John A. Cobb. Prospering in the years of Reconstruction, he gradually became one of Sumter's largest landowners. His wife, whom he married on February 5, 1867, was the former Miss Martha Harris, daughter of Issac and Province (Alsobrook) Harris of Sumter and Warren Counties.⁸

Another local cotton concern, the Planters' Warehouse, was owned by Captain Calvin Walker Felder. A resident of Americus since 1852, he was born in Orangeburg District, South Carolina, on January 5, 1820. He served in the Creek Indian War of 1836, and in the Civil War as captain on the staff of General Henry K. McKay. On September 7, 1851 he married Miss Mary Ann Jackson, daughter of Joseph Jackson, of Americus. Their childred were: Joseph Jackson, who served with the Sumter Light Guards in the Civil War and died at Winchester,



Virginia; Annie Mary (Mrs. Lavendar R. Ray), William Calvin, Lula, Ida (Mrs. W. J. Thornton), Katherine (Mrs. John R. Shaw; later Mrs. T. J. Stovall), Leila, Inez and John B. Felder.⁹

The oldest cotton warehouse in town, Harrold, Johnson & Company, was reorganized following the death of Thomas Harrold in 1887 and was known thenceforth as Johnson & Harrold. The latter concern was composed of Henry R. Johnson and Uriah B. Harrold.¹⁰

Americus had a number of cotton buyers, all men of experience and with large connecfions. The grand mogul of them all was Colonel A. S. Cutts, who probably handled more cotton than any other man in the town's history.¹¹

Cotton was often sampled and sold on the streets. Frequently a farmer would meet a buyer upon driving into town and sell his cotton then and there. At other times the farmers would make the rounds of local stores, inspecting goods, sometimes leaving an order, and generally departing with the promise, "I'll be back when I sell my cotton."¹²

Planters from miles around took their cotton to Americus. Those living whithin twenty or thirty miles of Columbus preferred to drive forty or fifty miles to Americus rather than navigate the hill country near the western city.¹³

No cotton was allowed to be sold after sundown. Wagons arriving late in the afternoon would be driven to one of several wagon yards located on the outskirts of town. There the teams would be unhitched and the mules bedded down in the stables, while the drivers were accommodated in bunk rooms situated in the lofts. Early the next morning they would drive in and have their fluffy white cargo inspected by the buyers.¹⁴

Most planters sent their cotton wagons to market as soon as they were loaded. Captain John A. Cobb, one of the largest planters in the county, was a notable exception to this practice. With a sure flair for the dramatic, he held his cotton until his entire crop was picked and loaded. Then he had his thirty or forty wagons roll into Americus in a single column. At the head of the procession was a brass band, followed by Captain Cobb on his white charger with gilded harness. It was the grandest spectacle of the year and the populace, young and old alike, enjoyed it hugely.¹⁵

Americus, like other towns of the period, was deathly afraid of having an epidemic of those scourges of the nineteenth century - typhoid fever, yellow fever, and small-pox. In 1883 Mayor John B. Felder announced that he and the city council would ask the General Assembly to pass an act giving them "....the power to compel the removal of persons who have smallpox to a small-pox hospital or pest house, and to make vaccinations compulsory upon all persons living in Americus, and to quarantine all persons who have been exposed to small-pox."¹⁶

Later, when a devastating yellow fever epidemic was raging at Brunswick, the city council and the board of health maintained a rigid quarantine against that city and all other infected areas. Guards were placed on both railroads entering Americus and no persons from an area of contagion were permitted to leave trains while they were stopped in the town.¹⁷

THE EDUCATION SCENE

A Sumter County man, W. A. Wilson, was a member of a seven-man committee appointed by the legislature in 1883 to "investigate the propriety and expediency of establishing in this State a school of technology." The committee met in New York on June 8 of that year and visited schools and teachers there and in Boston.¹⁸ Upon their return, the members recommended the establishment of such a school in Georgia. Thus was born the present Georgia Institute of Technology.

In 1883 Mr. Wilson ended a ten-year term as county school superintendent and was succeeded by L. P. Howell. The latter died in office eight years later and W. S. Moore was named to fill the vacancy. In 1889, by statutory law, the public school term was extended from three to four

months in the fall of the year. The Sumter County schools opened at seven o'clock in the morning and closed at five in the afternoon. In 1891 the school term was again extended one month. In that same year was organized the Teachers' Institute, forerunner of the present Sumter County Teachers' Association. 19

In 1883 John M. Cannon was named to succeed John Neely as superintendent of the Americus public schools. He served until 1888, at which time A. J. M. Bizien assumed the duties of the office. He, in turn, was succeeded in 1891 by William Harper. A fourth year was added to the high school program in 1885. 20

Americus acquired a new postmaster in 1885 when J. C. Roney was named by President Grover Cleveland to succeed Major William A. Black. At that time the post office was rented by private funds, or by the Government if the volume of business was sufficiently large to warrant such an expenditure of public monies. Representative Charles F. Crisp arranged for a permanent building to be erected, and the contract for its construction was awarded to Johnson & Harrold. The new three-story edifice on the north side of Forsyth Street between Cotton Avenue and Jackson Street was occupied in 1891. The first new postmaster to serve in the commodius structure was John N. Scarborough, who was appointed by President Cleveland in 1892. 21

The Presbyterian Church sold its building on East Lamar Street in 1883 and began construction of a new sanctuary. The site chosen was the law office of Colonel N. A. Smith, located on the west side of Jackson Street between Lamar and Church streets. The new Victorian-Gothic church was constructed entirely of Georgia products, the enormous beams being of heart pine and the pews of pine with walnut ornamentation. It was occupied in 1884. The committee in charge of construction was composed of C. M. Wheatley, W. H. C. Dudley, and N. G. Prince. 22

Local Baptists, who in 1882 had changed the name of their church from Bethel Baptist to Americus Baptist, suffered a severe blow on June 14, 1884, when their building was consumed by fire. In the next six years the congregation met in a tent, in the Opera House and in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. In 1890 a large and ornate red brick structure on the northeast corner of Taylor and Lee streets was completed under the direction of a committee composed of Dr. A. B.



Campbell, S. H. Hawkins, John Windsor, R. T. Byrd, J. J. Williford, Thornton Wheatley and John R. Shaw. Pastors of the church in recent years had been: Dr. A. B. Campbell (1874-1876), Dr. G. F. Cooper (1876-1878), the Reverend B. W. Bussey (1878-1883), the Reverend J. L. Vass (1883-1884), and Dr. A. B. Campbell (1884-1894) 23

Calvary Episcopal Church was experiencing considerable difficulty in continuously retaining the services of a rector. The following men were in charge of services over a ten-year period: John Neely, lay reader (1881-1883); vacancy, (1883-1885); the Reverends Charles C. Randolph (1885-1886), E. W. Burnstead (1887), Walter R. Dye (1887-1888), (vacancy, 1888-1890), William C. Langston (1890), Hobart C. Brayton (1890-1891), H. R. Sargent (1892); S. S. Shipps, lay reader (1892), and the Reverend W. Woodson Walker, who arrived in December, 1892.²⁴

A new religious group came into existence late in the 'Eighties when a half-dozen local Catholic families began holding services in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Christopher J. Sherlock. In 1891 Saint Mary's Catholic Church was formally organized and construction was begun upon a sanctuary, the site chosen being a lot on the east side of Lee Street between Taylor Street and Brannan Avenue. It was consecrated by Bishop Becker, of Savannah.²⁵

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Several new financial institutions were organized in the period 1883-1893. The first of these, the Peoples' National Bank, was organized in 1883 by S. H. Hawkins and a group of associates.²⁶ In 1886 Mr. Hawkins formed a partnership with J. E. D. Shipp and H. C. Bagley and bought a controlling interest in the Bank of Americus.²⁷ In 1887 these three men, together with J. J. Williford, P. C. Clegg and Captain S. W. Coney, organized the Americus Investment Company with a capitalization of one million dollars.²⁸ In that same year the Bank of Southwestern Georgia was formed by J. W. Wheatley, Moses Speer, W. H. C. Dudley and A. W. Smith as successor to J. W. Wheatley & Company.²⁹

The Georgia Loan and Trust Company was organized in 1883³⁰ by Oliver A. Coleman and associates. The Americus Savings Bank, incorporated in 1890 by Allen Fort, R. T. Byrd, N. A. Ray, J. N. Carter, W. L. Glesener, J. B. Felder and John Windsor, was re-incorporated the next year by G. W. Glover, L. Cooper, Frank Lanier and W. E. Murphy.³¹ The Bank of Commerce was organized by J. W. Sheffield, and the Planter's Bank of Americus was organized by George W. Council and his sons, Lee and Charles M. Council. The last two institutions were chartered in 1891, but they did not open for business until 1892.³²

The Americus, Preston and Lumpkin Railroad was opened to traffic as far as Lumpkin in March of 1886. Its charter was amended in that year to permit an eastward extension to the Ocmulgee River and a westward extension to the Chattahoochee River. The charter was amended again in 1887 to provide for the operation of boat lines in connection with the road and to permit a further extension of the tracks to Savannah. Subsequently five steamboats plied the Ocmulgee River between Abbeville and the ports of Brunswick and Savannah.³³

A special act of the Legislature of Georgia, approved December 26, 1888, changed the name of the corporation to the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway and authorized the directors to apply to the Legislature of Alabama for permission to extend the road from the Chattahoochee River westward to Montgomery. The latter authorization was obtained on December 11, 1889. Subsequently the Legislature of Georgia granted the Company permission to construct and operate a telegraph line and to increase its capital stock to five million dollars. 34

When the railroad was extended east of Americus it passed through a long stretch of Sumter and Dooly counties that was thinly populated. The Americus Investment Company, which financed much of its expansion, decided to establish a town in the latter county. The site selected was the plantation which had belonged to former Governor Joseph E. Brown. 35 The town was named Cordele in honor of Colonel S. H. Hawkins' wife, Cordelia. 36 In 1890 the Cordele Hotel Company, one of numerous subsidiaries of the Investment Company, began erection of the Suwanee Hotel, "A magnificent structure costing \$60,000." 37 The town grew rapidly and attracted a large number of residents from Americus. Among these persons were J. E. D. Shipp, who became the first president of the Chamber of Commerce; W. E. Murphy, who became president of the First National Bank; Judge Scott, who later served as mayor; R. W. Lockett, and Z. A. Littlejohn. 38

Other villages established along the "SAM's" route were named by officials of the company or by their families. Colonel Hawkins' family, fresh from a European junket, bestowed such Old World names as Seville, Rhine and Vienna. 39 The Colonel's private railroad car was named for one of his daughters, Nannie Lou (later the second wife of T. B. Hooks).

The railroad passed through two villages a few miles east of Americus which have since been noted for their sturdy citizenry. One of these, Leslie, was founded by J. W. Bailey in 1884 on the site of a six-year old settlement known as Jeb. 40 The other, DeSoto, was developed as a result of the SAM's extension through a plantation owned by Colonel Hawkins. The property was said to have been the site of a camp pitched by Hernando DeSoto's men in 1540. A well on the old C. C. Womack place was even reputed to have been dug by the thirsty adventurers. The town flourished briefly before it was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1906, after which it was a part of five thousand acres purchased by a Minnesota company. Some years later the property was acquired by Arthur Rylander and Frank Sheffield, of Americus, who divided it and sold it as farms and building lots. Among well known early residents of DeSoto were E. S. Ferguson, Shepherd Pryor, Dr. George W. Bagley, Dr. Frank L. Cato and others. 41

Although the fortunes of the SAM road were of burning importance to a large majority of Americus' residents, it was not the only railroad undertaking in which local men were involved.

In June, 1887, a plan was formulated to build a road from LaCross to Americus. A company was organized with U. B. Harrold as president and James M. Lowe, who had been president of the Buena Vista & Ellaville Railroad, as vice-president. Directors from Americus were W. A. Black, M. Speer, J. W. Wheatley, R. J. Perry, N. A. Smith, D. W. Bagley, and Mr. Harrold. The line was completed in November, 1887, and five months later the Savannah & Western Railroad bought it and immediately extended it to Columbus. The stockholders were paid thirty dollars per share for stock which they had bought at one hundred dollars per share.⁴² As a result of this deal, U. B. Harrold was elected to the board of directors of the Central Railroad of Georgia, which controlled the Savannah & Western.⁴³

Other local men were busily establishing new businesses or consolidating with and expanding established concerns. In the former category were the American Express Company⁴⁴ and the Americus Guano Company⁴⁵, both organized in 1886; the AP&L Warehouse and Compress Company, organized in 1887 with J. J. Williford as president and C. H. Wootten as secretary and treasurer;⁴⁶ Council & Hooks, a warehouse and compress owned by Lee Council and Thomas B. Hooks;⁴⁷ the Sumter Real Estate & Improvement Company, organized in 1888;⁴⁸ the Americus Oil Company, founded by Marion S. Harper and R. L. McMath in 1891;⁴⁹ the Americus Illuminating & Power Company, organized in 1891 by U. B. Harrold;⁵⁰ the Americus Construction Company, organized by Charles M. Wheatley in 1893.⁵¹

Another new business was the Americus Grocery Company, which was organized in 1891 by George W. Glover and Frank Lanier. Mr. Glover previously had been engaged in the retail grocery business with R. J. Perry under the firm name of Glover & Perry.⁵²

An old business changed hands and acquired a new name in 1889 when John R. Shaw, successor to Montgomery & Shaw, sold his general mercantile business to W. D. Bailey. The latter reorganized the business and specialized in gentlemen's fine wearing apparel. The firm, located on the northeast corner of Forsyth Street and Cotton Avenue, employed R. O. Woodall, Johnnie Hardy, Will Wright, Lee Allen, Tom Felder, S. S. Sullivan (book-keeper), and Frank Oliver (porter).⁵³

William Douglass Bailey was a newcomer to Americus. He was a native of Cuthbert, where he was born on May 9, 1859, the younger son of Francis David Bailey, a brilliant young attorney who died in the Civil War. His mother, the former Miss Narcissa Weekley Douglass, subsequently became the second wife of Judge Bedford S. Worrill of Cuthbert. Young William received his education at his mother's private school and as a special student at Andrew Female College in his native town. At the time of their arrival in Americus, Mr. Bailey and his first wife, the former Miss Annie Louise Ansley, were the parents of three children: Mamie (later Mrs. Henry Johnson Bagley), Eugene and William F. Bailey. Subsequently Mr. Bailey married Mrs. Anna Charlton (Thiot) Goin and Miss Floyd Williford, both of Atlanta, the latter of whom was a daughter of former Ameri-

cus residents Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Williford. Thrice a widower, Mr. Bailey died on November 22, 1947. 54

Another new resident was Dr. Charles A. Brooks, who arrived in 1884 and entered into a partnership with Dr. Sion B. Hawkins. Born in Marion County on January 1, 1861, he was a son of Dr. Terrell J. Brooks and the former Miss Nancy Matthews. He was educated at Emory College and was graduated in medicine by Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York. His wife, whom he married on June 15, 1887, was the former Miss Willie Copeland of Harris County. Dr. Brooks served as chairman of the Americus Board of Health and as a director of the Peoples' National Bank. He was a nephew of Mrs. S. H. Hawkins. 55

A man destined to become one of Americus' most distinguished citizens arrived in 1886, close upon the heels of his brother-in-law, Dr. Brooks. He was John Edgar Dawson Shipp, who immediately became vice-president of the Bank of Americus and a director of the SAM Railway. Born in Cusseta on October 4, 1858, he was a son of William W. and Mary Frances (McLester) Shipp. He was educated in the public schools of his home county, at Stade's Select School in Columbus, and at Gordon Military Institute at Barnesville. He took a BA degree at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, where he founded a chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. While serving as principal of a school at Cusseta in 1880, he read law and was admitted to the bar. He opened his own law office and, in 1882 and 1883, represented Chatahoochee County in the legislature. His wife, whom he married on March 13, 1880, was the former Miss Freddie Brooks, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Terrell J. Brooks of Marion County. Mr. Shipp was regarded as the founder of Cordele, where he lived from 1888 until he returned to Americus in 1892. 56

One of Georgia's eminent men of this period was Judge Allen Fort, who was appointed to the state's newly-created Railroad Commission in 1891. While serving as a member of the General Assembly (1873-74, 1877, 1878-79), he had introduced the bills which created both the railroad commission and the public school system of Americus. From 1882 through most of 1891, he rendered outstanding service as judge of the Southwestern Circuit. Earlier he had served as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention of 1876. Judge Fort was born on July 14, 1849 in Stewart County, son of James A. and Mary (Belcher) Fort. Entering the University of Georgia as a junior, he was graduated in 1866, after which he read law in the office of Willis A. Hawkins and was admitted to the bar in 1868. On December 13, 1876, he married Miss Floyd Hollis, one of the most beautiful and brilliant women in the state. She was the daughter of John F. and Susan (Cherry) Hollis of Buena Vista. Judge Fort's brother, Dr. James Arthur Fort, was for many years a prominent physician in Americus. 57

Americus was the scene in 1892 of a sensational murder case involving two local physicians and a local dentist. The former, Doctors

J. B. and A. B. Hinkle, were accused of slaying Dr. Joseph J. Worsham. Under an Americus dateline, The Macon Telegraph reported the incident as follows:

".....The old man, Dr. J. B. Hinkle, said he did the killing, claiming his son did not fire any of the shots.....Indignation was, for an hour after the tragedy, at fever heat, and more than 200 excited citizens gathered in front of the jail, threatening lynching...[It all began when] Dr. W. P. Burt, a dentist of this city, sued Dr. J. B. Hinkle on a dental account. On the trial of the case last week Dr. Worsham, also a dentist, testified in favor of Dr. Burt and directly opposite to the testimony of Dr. Hinkle, as to what occurred in Dr. Worsham's office about some work Dr. Burt did for Hinkle's son. The jury found a verdict in favor of Dr. Burt last Friday." 58

"Dr. Worsham, in passing the Hinkles' office, spoke to the two doctors, who were standing on the front porch. They ordered Dr. Worsham not to speak to them again, saying that he swore falsely. He retorted that they testified before the same jury and that the jury decided that Hinkle, and not Worsham, had sworn to a lie. Tonight Dr. Worsham was again passing the Hinkle office on his way home. It is not known what words passed between them. Dr. Horine, Mr. Arthur Rylander, Mr. J. H. Simpkins [and] Dr. Beckwith were some of the parties near, and none heard any firing before the firing began [sic]......Dr. Worsham was dead when the nearest reached him....The tragedy is much deplored. Dr. Worsham was a general favorite, everybody's friend, brother-in-law of Mr. J. R. Shaw of this city and brother of Mr. Lee Worsham of Macon and Hon. Mr. Worsham of Monroe County." 59

The Hinkles were tried before Judge J. C. Matthews in January, 1893. They were represented by a brilliant battery of legal talent: Fort & Watson, Blalock & Hallson, James Dodson & Son, and Pilsbury & Winchester. Equally impressive was the prosecution's array of attorneys: Washington Dessau of Macon, Fleming du Bignon of Savannah, and B. P. Hollis and E. A. Hawkins of Americus. After a full preliminary investigation, Judge Matthews committed the two doctors to jail for murder. 60

The case was continued several times, first to allow a group of prominent physicians from throughout Georgia to determine the state of the elder doctor's sanity, and later because of his alleged poor health. Shortly thereafter, Dr. J. B. Hinkle committed suicide in jail. Ultimately his son was freed, after which he moved to Macon and resumed the practice of his profession. The wanton destruction of a kindly and beloved man remained a cause celebre for many years. 61

Americus suffered a great loss in the death of Dr. Worsham, but it also gained a new citizen who was attracted by the vacancy it created.62 This man, Dr. Stephen Henry McKee, arrived from Columbus in 1893 and immediately began the practice of dentistry. He was a man of superior professional ability, possessed of considerable civic pride and of a personal charm

that was to endear him to several generations of his fellow citizens. Dr. McKee was born in Harris County on December 25, 1877. He was educated at Vanderbilt University, where he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity.⁶³ Dr. McKee's wife was the former Miss Elizabeth Council, daughter of Malcolm B. Council, of Americus.

Another new professional man of this period was Dr. John I. Darby, physician and surgeon. He arrived from Columbia, South Carolina, in 1892 and associated himself with Dr. R. E. Cato. A native of Stewart County, he was born on June 18, 1851, son of John W. and Susan (White) Darby. He attended Alabama Medical College, was graduated by Tulane's medical school and took post-graduate work at New York Poly Clinic. Dr. Darby married Miss Londie Espy of Lawrence, Alabama on October 29, 1879. Their only child, Susie, later became Mrs. N. Macon Dudley, of Americus. Mrs. Darby died on March 10, 1883, and on December 18 of the following year Dr. Darby married Miss Lavonia Hill, also of Lawrence. ⁶⁴

MODERN CONVENiences

In January, 1886, Uriah B. Harrold installed the first telephone system in Americus. It was a four-party line connecting the Southwestern Railroad (one ring), Harrold, Johnson & Company (two rings), Mr. Harrold's residence (three rings), and the residence of Henry R. Johnson (four rings). By promising to obtain additional subscribers, Mr. Harrold succeeded in interesting Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company in taking over the line. Accordingly, on December 21, 1887, the line was sold and the four customers thereafter paid five dollars per month annually in advance until the company installed an exchange to serve the thirty-one original subscribers. The first switchboard was installed on the first floor of a two-story building at the corner of Jefferson Street and Cotton Avenue.⁶⁵

Americus had acquired a gas plant in 1884, which soon enabled oil lamps and candles to be replaced by elegant brass fixtures for gas illumination. With the advent of electricity in 1891, even greater changes were made possible in the lighting of homes, businesses and public streets. ⁶⁶

The first electrically-driven streetcars in Georgia were placed in operation in Americus early in the 'Nineties. As most people had their own horse-drawn vehicles, however, the venture was not a success. The cars were withdrawn and the tracks removed after a few years.⁶⁷

The route of the Americus Electric Railway's cars was as follows: from the car barn west of Cotton Avenue, south to Forsyth Street, east to Jackson Street, south to College Street, east to Lee Street (there was a switch track in front of the Bailey and Cobb residences), south to Leeton Park (vicinity of present Country Club), northeast and across the SAM tracks on a trestle, north to Felder Street, west to and completely around Rees Park, west on Taylor Street, north on Lee Street to the courthouse,

west on Forsyth Street to Cotton Avenue and thence back to the barn. The first motormen or conductors were Eugene V. Haynes, Edward Y. Andrews and Taylor Felder. 68

Americus acquired a large number of important new buildings in the period 1883-93. The first major construction began in 1887 when a new courthouse was erected on the southeast corner of Lee and Forsyth Sts. It was constructed of red brick and granite and had a tall corner clock tower rising high above the two floors and basement. County commissioners at the time were J. H. Black, president; J. W. Wheatley, secretary, S. H. Hawkins, C. A. Huntington and J. A. Cobb. The building was designed by Bruce and Morgan, Atlanta architects; the contractor was Angus McGilvray, and the superintendent of construction was Jere Fuss. 69



Four years later the commissioners decided to build a new jail on the adjoining Lee Street property. The contract was let to the Pauley Jail Company of St. Louis for a consideration of \$22,600. The new house of detention was proudly described as follows:

"It is to be one of the most commodious and best arranged jails in the state. Besides being absolutely secure for desperate criminals, it will have separate apartments for women and children, also for insane and for United States prisoners, a hospital for the nursing and treatment of the sick and large, comfortable rooms for those charged with minor offenses." 70

In 1890 a combined city hall and fire station of three floors was erected in the same block as the courthouse and jail, adjoining on the south side the 150-foot high brick water tower which had been built in 1887. The committee in charge of planning the new facility was composed of P. H. Williams, J. A. Dodson and T. F. Logan, chairmen; J. J. Williford, J. C. Mathews, J. L. Adderton and D. K. Brinson. The architect was G. L. Norman and the builder was James Smith. 71

The most impressive addition to the town was the Windsor Hotel, a five-story edifice of granite and red brick, which was erected in 1891 on the southwest corner of the original town square. It was constructed by a group of local capitalists at a cost of \$150,000 in an effort to care for the annual influx of winter tourists en route to resorts in south Georgia and Florida. Its exterior was ornamented by numerous balconies, porches, towers and turrets, and the interior boasted of central heating, elevators, and baths in every suite. Its elaborately decorated lobbies, parlors and one hundred rooms were sumptuously furnished in oak and pine. The "last word" in Victorian elegance, it bore the name of a local capitalist, John Windsor. 72



WINDSOR HOTEL

The new hotel filled a great need, for Americus had lost several of its well known hosteries. The famous old Barlow House, a twenty-four room establishment on the west side of Jackson Street between Lamar and Forsyth Streets, had burned in 1884.⁷³ Dr. W. W. Barlow's widow promptly replaced it with the "Barlow Block," a two-story building which still stands. Two other landmarks, the French and Cain hotels, burned at about the same time. They were located on the site of the new courthouse and jail. The French Hotel, which occupied one of the town's oldest and handsomest buildings, had been out of business for some ten years before it was burned. In its last years it was the residence of Thomas Wesley Ansley, an affluent Randolph County planter who moved to Americus to be near his daughters while they were enrolled at Furlow Masonic Female College. ⁷⁴

The only hotels in operation when the Windsor was opened were the Allen House, which occupied an entire block on the east side of Cotton Avenue, beginning at the northeast corner of Forsyth Street, and the Hawkins House, located at the southeast corner of Cotton Avenue and Forsyth Streets. The former was operated by Captain W. H. Allen, and the latter was the property of S. H. Hawkins.

In those free and easy days before the advent of Prohibition, the Allen House Bar frequently advertised such concoctions as "Blue Blazes," "Black Stripe, a winter drink," "Peach and Honey, for coughs and colds," Hot Tom and Jerry," "The Only Original Virginia Toddy," "Manhattan and Turf Cocktails," "Amour Sin Fin Poussee La Amour," and, always, its specialty, "When the stomach refuses everything else it WILL retain a Rocky Mountain Oyster served at the Allen House Bar." ⁷⁵

The town had a number of other establishments where drinks were served deftly and plentifully, with a light lunch passed among the customers free of charge. The two most popular saloons of the day were those operated by T. J. Baisden and R. L. McLeod, the former on Cotton Avenue and the latter in the Glover Opera House. ⁷⁶

The Opera House had been erected by George W. Glover in 1882 at a cost of \$14,000. ⁷⁷ The building, located on the north side of Forsyth Street between Lee Street and Windsor Avenue, is still an Americus landmark. Originally a spacious covered porch extended out over the sidewalk, but that quaint appendage was removed a few years prior to 1940. In its heyday the Glover Opera House filled its one thousand seats with select audiences from Americus and surrounding towns. Each season the best theatrical and musical talents of the country made brief "stands" in Americus. Such luminaries of the stage as the Drews, Dolly and Milton Noble, Robert Downing and others were old favorites with local audiences in those halcyon days. ⁷⁸

In addition to the previously named buildings, Americus acquired the following new business structures in this period - all of which continued to serve the business needs of the Nineteen Fifties; the "Byne Block" on the

northwest corner of Lee and Forsyth Streets, built in 1887 on a vacant lot adjoining the Council & Williford warehouse; the building later occupied by the Americus Baking Company, located on the south side of Forsyth Street mid-way between Jackson Street and Windsor Avenue; the Johnson & Harold warehouse, erected in 1889 on the west side of Cotton Avenue halfway between the Allen House and the Southwestern Railroad tracks;⁷⁹ the "block" on the southwest corner of Lee and Lamar streets (the downstairs of which had long been headquarters of the two volunteer fire companies and the upstairs of which had served since 1880 as the city hall), remodeled in 1890 by a Mr. Hamilton;⁸⁰ the Southwestern Railroad passenger station, erected in 1891 at the point where the railroad's tracks crossed Cotton Avenue and McGarrah Street;⁸¹ the Thornton Wheatley building, erected in 1892 on the west corner of Forsyth Street and recently-opened Windsor Avenue,⁸² and the "Thomas Block," long-time home of the Bank of Southwestern Georgia, erected on the northwest corner of Forsyth and Jackson streets circa 1890. ⁸³

The building of new railroads and the extension of existing facilities continued at a feverish pace. A new contender for traffic entered the picture when the Savannah & Western Railroad was opened from Americus to Columbus in 1889. Six years later its name was changed to Central of Georgia Railway Company. ⁸⁴

The fourth annual meeting of stockholders of the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway was held at the Opera House in Americus on July 9, 1889, with 1,279 1/4 of the 1,515 outstanding shares represented. Net earnings to date were reported as \$175,219.02, this being a profit of 60 1/4. Directors elected were: C. A. Huntington, Thornton Wheatley, George W. Glover, J. E. D. Shipp, S. H. Hawkins, J. B. Hudson, T. S. Chappell, J. R. Stapleton, J. M. Scott, J. B. Latimer, J. W. May, James Fricker and J. D. Maynard. ⁸⁵

Dates of completion of several of the SAM's extensions were as follows: from Abbeville to Lyons, a distance of sixty-five miles, June 1, 1890; from Louvale to the State Line, a distance of thirteen miles, March 1, 1891, and from the state line to Hurtsboro, Alabama, a distance of twenty-five miles, March 1, 1891. These extensions were built with standard gauge tracks. On January 1, 1891, the gauge of the line between Abbeville and Louvale was changed from three feet to standard. At the time of the change of gauge, several revisions were made in the alignment between Americus and Louvale and the railroad's shops were moved from the west to the east side of Americus. From June, 1891, through November, 1892, the SAM operated the thirty-five mile road of the Albany, Florida and Northern Railway Company from Albany to Cordele. ⁸⁶

The SAM's successes, both in extending its facilities and in obtaining a large volume of business by virtue of its low freight rates, infuriated its competitors. Retaliation quickly followed. Reported the Macon Telegraph in a series of articles:

"Railroad officials in Macon are in receipt of information concerning a change of traffic arrangements on the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railroad that is somewhat startling in its nature.

"The railroads are notified of.....a split between the above road and the Richmond and Danville, controlling the Savannah and Western among its other leased lines.

"Heretofore, the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery road has had traffic arrangements with the Savannah and Western, and run trains through from its western terminus to Savannah, the eastern terminus of the Savannah and Western.

"The two roads connect at Lyons, and without a proper traffic arrangement, both would seem to be bottled up....It is supposed, however, that the Savannah and Western can afford this, for the Richmond and Danville... has refused to continue traffic arrangements with the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery, and now that road can only run its trains to Lyons and there stop. Through freights to Savannah have already been discontinued and passenger trains will run only as far as Lyons after Sunday. Railroad officials say this only means a move to gobble another road on the part of the Richmond and Danville....According to prominent authority, Georgia is to experience the fiercest railroad war within the next sixty days that has ever taken place in the country.....

"Col. S. H. Hawkins, president of the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railroad and Steamboat Company, says Americus is enjoying a 27 1/2 per cent lower rate on all Eastern freights than she was prior to her water connections through his road to Abbeville. In addition to this, the water line is working 10 per cent under the above figures, which really makes a reduction of 35 per cent on all Eastern freights....."87

"The real cause of the breaking off of the traffic agreements", the Telegraph continued, "was that the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery was invading the Central's territory and bringing freight from along its lines into Savannah....[It] has been doing a large business from Albany and other points along the Central . . . and is . . . cutting into the Central with its Montgomery extension, now nearly completed to Montgomery...."88

"The [SAM] is sending its freight by way of Helena and Jesup over the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia and the Savannah, Florida and Western railways....The Central can now refuse to take freights for Albany and other points in southwest Georgia via the SAM road so as to send them around by its own lines via Macon and the Southwestern division. The Central cannot be compelled to make a through rate, as the two roads are entirely separate and distinct properties...."89

Subsequently the Macon newspaper pointed out that, "The Richmond and Danville system....would not arrange a schedule that invited any through

travel, allowing or compelling (SAM) trains to remain more than four hours at Lyons before moving them on to Savannah, thus depriving the public of the benefit of the Columbus, Americus and Savannah short line.

"Col. Hawkins, by getting control of the Cordele and Albany road, made a short line from Albany to Savannah, which enabled him to almost monopolize the Eastern freight business of that city. And in the face of opposition that would have disheartened many, he has succeeded in pushing his road into Montgomery, which gives the shortest line between Montgomery and Savannah by more than fifty miles.

"Col. H. C. Bagley, president of the [Americus] Investment Company, which controls the SAM road, informs your correspondent that they have not violated the traffic agreement made with the Central, nor do they intend to, and intimates that the Central will be held to strict accountability for violating it, without the twelve months' notice plainly provided for in the written agreement between the two roads." 90

"Yesterday the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway deposited with its fiscal agent in Baltimore the money to pay the January coupons on the bonds of that road. This announcement with the listing of the bonds on the New York Stock Exchange and the running of regular schedules into Montgomery, during the past week has caused quite an active demand for the bonds at prevailing prices...." 91

The SAM's extension from Hurtsboro to Montgomery, a distance of fifty-six miles, was completed on December 1, 1891.. The Company guaranteed the bonds of the Montgomery Terminal Company and used its tracks under a lease executed early in 1892. Entrance into the Montgomery passenger station was over the tracks of the Montgomery & Eufaula Railway and the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company. 92

The Montgomery extension was opened on April 21, 1892. A crowd of four hundred people from Americus, Macon, Cordele, Albany, Richland and other Georgia towns boarded a special train in Americus at five o'clock that morning to make the initial run. A small group of distinguished guests rode with officials of the road and of the Americus Investment Company in Colonel Hawkins' private car. The man through whose energy and enterprise the road had been constructed was not present, however, he having been called to New York on an urgent matter. 93

The excursion train was met at Montgomery by a delegation of citizens and a brass band. Following a reception at the Board of Trade, a magnificent banquet for six hundred persons was served at the Exchange Hotel. 94

There was only one thing missing as the Americus contingent returned from the gala trip to Montgomery: a pithy comment in the pages of The Sumter Republican. Editor Charles W. Hancock, alas, had discontinued

his noted publication in 1889,⁹⁵ charging that local merchants had been so anxious to build up another paper that they had withdrawn almost their entire advertising patronage from the Republican!⁹⁶

The Americus Times-Recorder was founded in 1891 by Captain Bascom Myrick. It represented a merger of The Americus Recorder and the Americus Daily Times, the latter of which was established in 1890. Captain Myrick, a native of Liberty County, died in 1895, at which time his widow assumed active management of the Times-Recorder. The former Miss Mary Louise Scudder of Shelbyville, Tennessee, she was a vital force in the community for many years, and under her direction the paper attained its greatest editorial success.⁹⁷ In 1907 the Times-Recorder was sold to Thomas Gamble, a native of Richmond and later mayor of Savannah, who was editor and publisher for five years.⁹⁸

On December 7, 1891, Representative Charles F. Crisp was elected, on the thirtieth ballot, to serve as speaker of the House of Representatives in the United States Congress. His victory was the occasion for wild jubilation in Americus. The Young Men's Democratic Club organized a great rally in honor of their favorite son. Special excursion trains brought large crowds of supporters from all points between Lumpkin and Abbeville, while "Judge" Crisp's old home town of Ellaville turned out en masse. In token of their admiration and affection, the Young Men's Democratic Club sent to the Speaker a gavel of Sumter County oak, beautifully mounted and weighted with forty dollars in gold.⁹⁹

"Speaker Crisp sounds all right," said the Times-Recorder, "and some of these days it will be 'Senator Crisp' and then look out for 'President Crisp' about 1900."¹⁰⁰

A short time later, Speaker Crisp caused consternation in certain local circles when he failed to make a recommendation for a successor to Postmaster Joe Roney, whose appointment officially expired in 1891. Captain John A. Cobb filed his application for the job, but nothing came of it. It was noted that, "Roney is two years over his time and his case causes comment among the officials in the post office department."¹⁰¹

Sumter's representative did, however, propose Captain Bascom Myrick for a diplomatic post. The nomination was opposed by Secretary of the Interior Hoke Smith, ". . . . not because Mr. Myrick was against [President] Cleveland, but because of the character of his publications and the manner of his opposition, Mr. Myrick having charged Mr. Cleveland with being. . . . a 'mugwump,' a 'protectionist,' a 'goldbug of the highest order' and with being the 'holder of the Wall street corruption fund that is to be used against the Democratic party in the next campaign.' " The nomination of Myrick was defeated, but Crisp was assured that if he selected "some man against whom nothing can be brought," he would be given a post in the diplomatic service.¹⁰²

Captain Cobb, one of Americus' most highly esteemed citizens, did not obtain the postmastership, nor was he successful in his 1892 campaign for the office of mayor. In the latter instance he competed with Colonel A. S. Cutts, Sumter's representative to the General Assembly, to succeed John B. Felder, who did not offer for re-election after serving as mayor for fifteen years.¹⁰³

"Both candidates were popular men, and the race was nip and tuck. The betting on Cutts was heavy until 11 o'clock when the officers and employees of the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery railroad marched in line with flying banners and to the tune of martial music, cast a solid vote for Captain John A. Cobb.

"This discouraged some of Cutts' men, but the majority stuck to the old warhorse. The veteran of two wars was elected by a 59 majority. [Cutts: 351, Cobb: 292].

"Large amounts of money changed hands, and the city was certainly in the hands of Cutts' men last night. The victors were wild with enthusiasm and the 'Cutts battalion' shouted themselves hoarse in every ward of the city....."¹⁰⁴

For the election of county ordinary and clerk of superior court, "Judge Amos Speer, a one-legged Confederate veteran, and Clerk J. H. Allen will have no opposition as they are supposed to be invincible before the people."¹⁰⁵

General Philip Cook was honored in 1890 when Governor John B. Gordon appointed him secretary of state to fill the unexpired term of Major C. M. Barnett, deceased. Subsequently he was elected for a full term, and in 1892 he was re-elected to the high office.¹⁰⁶

The Confederacy was still very much alive in the hearts and minds of Americus, of Georgia and of the South. It never had a chance to be forgotten so long as it remained a political asset to candidates for everything from dogcatcher to governor. There were, of course, many persons in whom the word Confederate aroused only the finest, purest and most noble thoughts and actions. Most of the one thousand or more local men and women who annually boarded the excursion train to Andersonville probably belonged in that category. The trip was an all-day affair, and after they had heard memorial addresses and decorated the graves in the cemetery, families would spread cloths on the grass and enjoy picnic lunches.¹⁰⁷

Americus was honored in 1889 by the presence of Henry W. Grady, distinguished editor of The Atlanta Constitution. In company with a delegation of Atlanta veterans, he arrived to deliver an address at the annual reunion of Georgia's Confederate survivors. That was in August; in December he was dead, shortly after a former Americus woman, Mrs. W. L. Peel, had read to him newspaper accounts of Atlanta's memorial service

for Jefferson Davis. The death of the nationally famed spokesman for the New South plunged all of Georgia into mourning.¹⁰⁸

Americus was the site, in 1891, of the annual meeting of The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the South Georgia Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and of a demonstration by Professor Hermann, internationally famous magician ("who lives like a lord in his sumptuous railroad palace car").¹⁰⁹ In 1893 the town was host to the forty-fourth annual meeting of the Georgia Medical Association.¹¹⁰

Two other items of interest in this period were the opening of an Americus office of the Postal Telegraph Company, with direct service to Macon and Columbus,¹¹¹ and the contribution by local citizens of three hundred dollars to aid victims of an earthquake which devastated much of Charleston, South Carolina.¹¹²

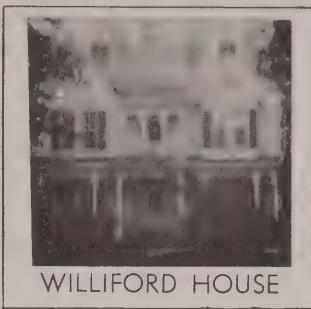
HOMES OF THE 'NINETIES

In the years when Americus grew in size and in wealth as a result of high prices for cotton, the flourishing empire of the SAM road and other enterprises, and the economic recovery from Reconstruction days, many new houses were constructed to accommodate the influx of new citizens and to provide larger and finer quarters for the older residents.

Shortly after the new Presbyterian church was erected, R. J. Perry built a large frame house on the lot adjoining it to the south. Across the street T. W. Ansley moved into the enlarged former residence of Captain P. H. Williams, located at the north end of a lot extending south to Church Street. The former Brinson residence on that street was bought by J. B. Dunn from M. Callaway for \$2,700¹¹³ (fifty years later this house was the residence of Mrs. Edward Heys, who later became the second wife of William B. Merritt). The house to the north of it was originally the residence of R. L. McMath, who later moved to the northeast corner of Rees Park and Felder Street. The two-story galleried structure on the southeast corner of Church and Jackson streets was successively the home of Captain A. A. Adams, D. C. N. Burkhalter, T. B. Hooks and Mrs. Arthur Bivins.

The attractive residence situated on Lee Street between the Methodist and Baptist churches was the home of Amos K. Schumpert (later the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. W. Hightower). John R. Shaw, who for years had lived at the corner of Jefferson and Jackson streets,¹¹⁴ built a new home on the southeast corner of Lee and Taylor streets for his second wife, the former Kate Felder; subsequently it was owned by John W. Shiver and S. R. Heys. Across from this house, on a lot north of Judge Allen Fort's home, P. C. Clegg built an interesting three-story residence (noted in the 1930's as Mrs. A. G. Ketcham's boarding house). It adjoined on the north the property of Dr. E. J. Eldridge.

In 1888 the Methodist parsonage property, including a one-story house fronting on Taylor Street and bound by the property of Mrs. Adderson (to the east), J. T. Brannan (to the south; this line later became Brannan Ave.), and J. J. Smith (to the west), was sold to J. J. Williford by the trustees of the Methodist church.¹¹⁵ Mr. Williford had the house moved up Taylor street some sixty feet to the center of the two-acre lot. Using the original dwelling as the central portion, he then had erected for his occupancy a large two-story



WILLIFORD HOUSE

frame house with high ceilings and wide porches. The first tennis court in Americus was laid out in a portion of the front yard, where it remained until grass was planted on the site circa 1938.¹¹⁶

The Oliver home on Church Street, at the end of Brown Street, burned in the 'Eighties while occupied by Jim Walton's family.¹¹⁷ Shortly thereafter, B. P. Hollis built on that site a charming little cottage which was set far back from the street.¹¹⁸ On the lot west of the Williford residence on Taylor Street, Speaker Charles F. Crisp erected a fine two-story frame house (years later it was the residence of Mrs. Mary B. Clay).¹¹⁹

Across the street was located the home of Ezekial Taylor (later owned by his daughter, Mrs. Henry Everett), while Mayor John B. Felder lived in the house on the west corner of Taylor and Barlow Streets, which his wife had inherited from her father, Seth K. Taylor. In later years this house was owned by Frank Lanier, who remodeled it extensively.

O. A. Coleman built a two-story house on the northeast corner of Lee and Burke Streets (later the residence of Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Gatewood, and now occupied by their daughter and son-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. E. W. Walde-mayer), and N. G. Prince built a two-story house on College Street at the head of Jackson Street (subsequently the home of Lee Allen and now owned by Sam Lott).

In 1890 the beautiful city block in which Colonel T. M. Furlow's late residence was situated was sub-divided into building lots. The central portion of the handsome house was moved back to face on Barlow Street (where it later served for many years as the city hospital, prior to being dismantled circa 1935), which had recently been cut through the rear of the property.¹²⁰ The wing of the house which had been occupied by James W. Furlow was moved to what then was the corner lot at the southwest intersection of Lee and Furlow streets. This one-story structure subsequently served as the home of W. B. Worthy, of Dr. R. E. Glenn and of C. B. Pouncey before it was restored by Mrs. Mary Sheffield Shayne in the 1940s.

The Furlow lots sold rapidly, most of them going to S. H. Hawkins, J. J. Williford, the Americus Investment Company, and the Sumter Real Estate and Improvement Company.¹²¹ The first residence constructed on the property was that of Dr. Charles Brooks (later the home of Dr. W. S. Pra-

ther, of Mrs. Roach-Bryan, and of Mrs. H. A. Cliett), which was erected in the middle of the Lee Street frontage. A few weeks later W. D. Bailey moved into his new home on the north side of this house, and about a year later J. G. Edmondson built a large two-story frame house on the other side of it. The latter house subsequently was the home of John T. Taylor, after whose death Henry O. Jones, Jr., bought it and converted it into apartments.

There were numerous houses erected in Americus during this period, but only six were notable examples of what came to be called Victorian architecture. All were very large two-story edifices with towers, several porches, dormer and bay windows with stained glass panes, walnut wainscoting, ceilings twelve feet high, enormous rooms, and varying amounts of "gingerbread" ornamentation. These houses were as follows:

The huge home of U. B. Harrold on the northwest corner of Lee and College streets (later the home of John W. Shiver), whose property extended north to the railroad tracks. From 1883 to 1893, Mr. Harrold had lived in the former home of Dr. George F. Cooper on College Street. 122

The home of W. D. Bailey on what was then the corner lot at the southeast intersection of Lee and College streets. In 1953, Mr. Bailey's heirs sold this house to the Central Baptist Church for use as a Sunday school building.

The home of H. C. Bagley, built on the site of Dupont Guerry's small home on the east corner of Brown and Taylor streets.¹²³ Subsequently, this house was the residence of J. W. Sheffield and, later, of his son Frank Sheffield. It was pulled down in 1946 and the space devoted to a lawn for the Brown Street residence of Frank Sheffield, Jr. The earlier Guerry home was moved to a new site on Horne Street.

The residence of M. B. Council, (now owned by his daughters, Mrs. S. H. McKee and Mrs. Nell Council), which was built upon an imposing site on the east side of Rees Park.124

The Church Street home of Eugene A. Hawkins (later occupied by the family of W. M. Andrews), which was a gift to his first wife from her father. It was located east of B. P. Hollis' house and west of Strife Street, which was so named by Mr. Hawkins because of the difficulties he encountered in permitting the town to cut it through his property. 125

The handsomest and certainly the costliest home of this period was the house which G. W. Glover built on the west side of Lee Street across from the Baptist Church. It was constructed of orange brick and white marble and rose to a height of three stories, the top one of which was a ballroom. Subsequently this magnificent establishment was the home of Charles M. Council and, at the time it was destroyed by fire in 1949, of the mortuary operated by I. B. Davis. 126

The occupants of these and of other homes of well known citizens were involved in the age-old rite of matrimony during the lush years of the 'Eighties and the 'Nineties. A marriage which took the town completely by surprise involved its richest widow and a popular local druggist. Under the heading, "An Unexpected Marriage," the Republican reported the 1885 nuptials of Mrs. Elizabeth J. Barlow, widow of Dr. W. W. Barlow, and Dr. E. J. Eldridge.¹²⁷

A few months later society turned out in its best bib and tucker for the brilliant wedding of Miss Elmer Buchanan and Linwood Bell. The ceremony was performed at the Methodist Church and the bridal couple was attended by fourteen close friends. Reported the Republican ecstatically,

"The bride in her pearl surrah silk immense train, draped elegantly (sic) in Oriental lace, with long waiving (sic) veil and white immortelles. The groom in his full court suit graced the occasion with much dignity and self-possession... (later at an elaborate reception at the residence of Captain A. G. Bell,) wine flowed freely and... the liberal host and his big harted wife done (sic) the honors of the occasion in royal style...."

In concluding its account of the nuptials, the Republican listed all wedding gifts received by the young couple, beginning with a tin washstand set from Mrs. Sallie Jones. ¹²⁸

A DAY IN COURT

Americus was much amused in 1890 by a criminal case involving a workman on the SAM road. This man, whose name was Dewees, lived at a boarding house run by a woman of some local fame. Unlike her other gentlemen friends, however, Mr. Dewees succumbed to her blandishments and soon married her.

Shortly thereafter the bridegroom was jailed on a charge of bigamy, it being claimed that he had a previous wife still living. He was without friends or relatives of local consequence, so he languished in jail for two or three months. Finally he appeared before a jury, with Judge Allen Fort sitting on the bench. Solicitor-General Frank Hooper appeared for the State and a local attorney represented the defendant.

In the course of testimony, Dewees spoke of Judge Fort as a "damned old baboon" and other such attractive forms of life. When the indignant jurist threatened him with contempt of court and a jail sentence, he scornfully replied that he had already met all of the flies and roaches in the filthy old jail. Then, again calling Judge Fort by an insulting name, he instructed him to keep quiet. Wheeling sharply, he bowed to the jury and said that what the old man on the bench thought of him wasn't important, but what the jurors thought was important. Amid laughter from the spectators, the Judge apparently decided that it would be the better part of wisdom for him to remain silent, which he did.

The first Mrs. Dewees and her grown daughter were present. The defendant claimed that while he was out West he had received a letter from the daughter telling him that her mother had died. To prove his point, he dramatically produced a letter and also a newspaper clipping announcing the woman's death. The jury acquitted Dewees of the bigamy charge and he walked from the courtroom arm-in-arm with his first wife. As he passed his second bride, whom he had called "a tallow-faced old hellcat" on the witness stand, he called out gaily, "Goodbye, Old Hellcat!"

The flabbergasted Solicitor and the courthouse wise men believed that Mrs. Dewees had slipped the letter to her husband in the course of a visit to his jail cell. The newspaper item was thought to have been prepared by a local print shop. 129

THE BUBBLE BURSTS

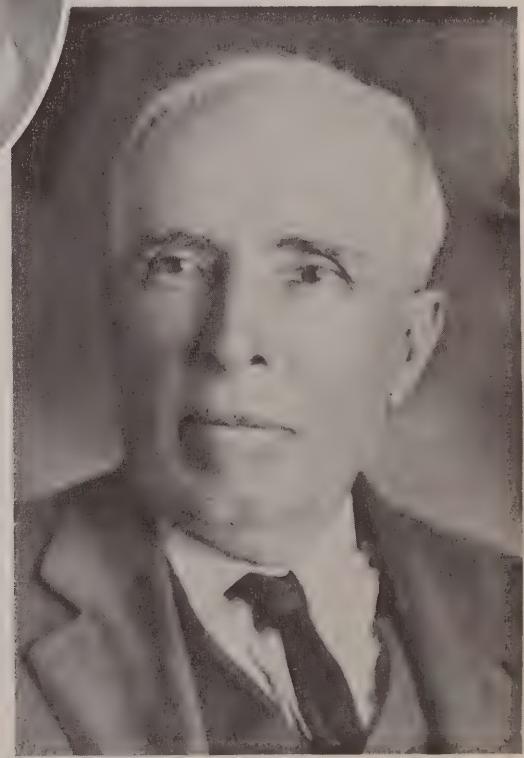
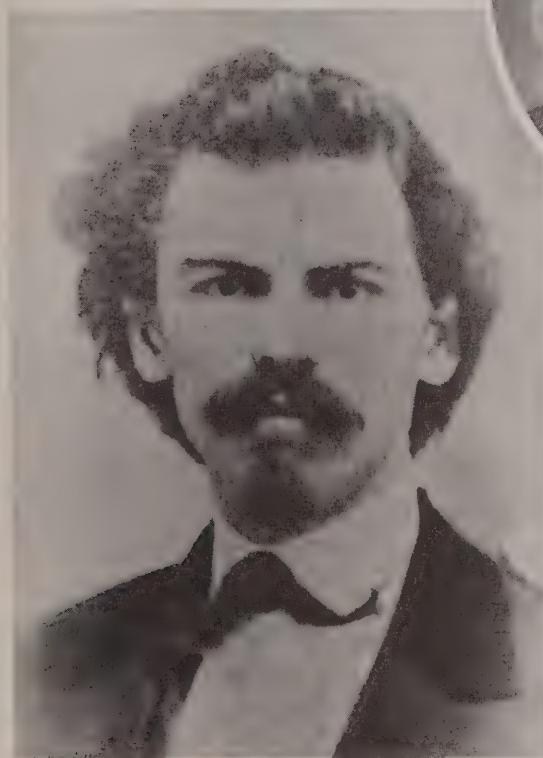
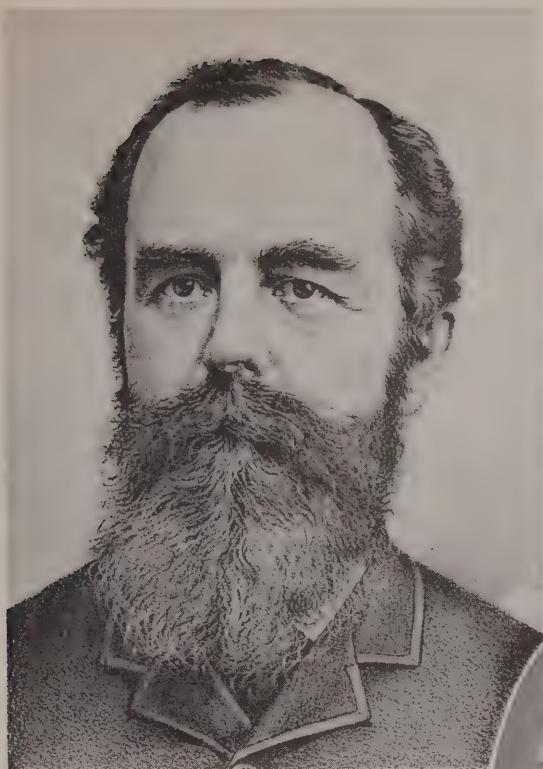
On November 27, 1892, A. O. Bacon of Macon introduced in the General Assembly a bill placing limitations upon the issuance of railroad stocks and bonds. It was designed to protect stockholders and to prevent the weakening of properties by avaricious corporate officials. Railroad men throughout the state flocked to Atlanta in an unsuccessful effort to defeat the bill. 130

Three days later, J. W. Sheffield and others filed a "friendly" petition in Sumter Superior Court asking that the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway be placed in the hands of a receiver. Judge W. H. Fish signed a bill to that effect and named President S. H. Hawkins as temporary receiver. The heavy outlay for the construction on the Montgomery end of the line had so cramped the finances of the road that Mr. Sheffield and other creditors were "doubtful" that the January interest payments could be met. They ostensibly acted so that the \$100,000 payments would not be sent north before local obligations were met. 131 With the SAM road eliminated, there remained only one railroad in Georgia that was not in a receivership. 132

Early in 1893 The Macon Telegraph reported:

"The S. A. M. road is considered by good railroad men to be one of the really great railroad projects of the South.

"The New York Commercial Bulletin publishes....that the present embarrassed condition of the S. A. M. road is due chiefly to the fact that the road cost more than was anticipated and to the low prices realized by the construction company for the bonds of the S. A. M. road, consequent upon the great depression prevailing in securities at the time, and the enforced employment of the earnings of the railroad company in payment for construction together with the depressed state of trade caused by the low prices realized for the cotton crop of 1891....In justice to the gentlemen who projected, built and managed the S. A. M. road, it is only fair to say that when errors were made they were errors of judgement and not of heart, and that



EMPIRE BUILDERS: (top, left) John West Sheffield, (right) Joseph Josiah Williford, (lower, left) Benjamin Pullum Hollis, (right) John Edgar Dawson Shipp, and (center) Samuel Hugh Hawkins.

they themselves are the heaviest losers, having staked their entire fortunes in an undertaking in which they had unbounded confidence. There must necessarily be some losses to the creditors of the company, but. the bondholders....need have little apprehension. It will take time to reorganize and readjust, but we believe the property to be fully worth the mortgage of \$12,000 per mile. It has cost very considerably more...."133

The situation for Americus worsened rapidly. In the middle of January the Bank of Americus closed its doors. Long a prosperous institution, it had in recent years concentrated upon the SAM's business to the gradual exclusion of other customers. Consequently, its deposits had decreased from \$140,000 down to \$50,000, while its rediscounts were reduced by some \$100,000. The bank was the designated State depository for the southwest section of Georgia, and the State had a balance of almost \$15,000. The city of Americus had \$15,800 on deposit and the county had a balance of \$1,800.134

The officers of the Bank of Americus at the time were: S. H. Hawkins, president; Thornton Wheatley, vice president; M. B. Campbell, cashier; Liston Cooper, assistant cashier. Directors were: P. C. Clegg, G. W. Glover, S. Montgomery, James Dodson, J. W. Sheffield, and Messrs. Hawkins, Wheatley and Campbell.135

In March the bank reopened with G. W. Glover as president.136 In April it again suspended payment and in May the stockholders voted to liquidate. Thornton Wheatley assumed charge of the institution's affairs and announced that assets were believed to be in excess of liabilities.137

As a result of the failure of the Bank of Americus, the non-resident bondholders of the SAM road asked that Colonel Hawkins be removed as receiver. In addition, they requested that the control of the road be transferred from Sumter Superior Court to the United States Circuit Court for the Southern District of Georgia. As a result of this petition, T. Edward Hambleton of Baltimore was named co-receiver with Colonel Hawkins, and Judge Emory Speer assumed jurisdiction over the road's affairs. 138

Americus had been startled late in December, 1892, when H. C. Bagley, president of the Americus Investment Company, suddenly resigned, sold his home and moved to Atlanta,139 where he was to live many years as an influential and wealthy citizen. His successor was Perry C. Clegg, formerly a vice president of the multi-million dollar concern. 140

The town was shocked when it learned late on the afternoon of February 18 that the Americus Investment Company had been placed in the hands of a receiver. This action was taken upon the petition of the bank of Stewart & Company and others.141 Judge Fish appointed John W. Wheatley permanent receiver, a choice that was highly satisfactory to a large majority of the company's creditors. 142

As Americus shuddered at the implications apparent in this failure, the

SAM's conductors and engineers went out on a strike and all trains stopped running. The men took this action in consequence of a failure to get new contracts with the receivers. The latter had declared the old contracts void and, in addition, had reduced the salaries of conductors. Colonel Hawkins disclaimed any authority to make new contracts without instructions of the court; the court refused to take official cognizance of what was termed the business of the receiver. 143

In May Messrs. Hawkins and Hambleton sent circulars to all SAM employees stating that certificates in the amounts of \$100, \$200, \$300, \$400 and \$500 would be issued in lieu of back pay due them for the period July 1 - December 1, 1892. Commenting upon the employees' predicament, The Macon Telegraph observed:

"It means to them that if they are due less than \$100 by the company they must pay the difference between their wages and that figure in order to get a receiver's certificate, which they cannot by any possibility sell at par.

"It looks very much as if the receivers, unable to raise money by regular methods, propose to get something from their employees by collecting these differences...." 144

Failures increased on all sides. The Bank of Sumter, located on the west side of Cotton Avenue between Lamar and Forsyth streets, quietly shut its doors. Cashier Furlow was quoted as saying the bank's New York correspondent had failed to grant a routine request for a loan. 145 Subsequently it was announced that the bank's assets were more than double its liabilities of \$60,000, and that depositors would be paid twenty-five per cent of their deposits on a monthly basis. 146

Upon the petition of creditors, Judge Fish appointed J. B. Fitzgerald temporary receiver of the stock of D. B. Hill, the town's largest dealer in coffins, furniture and house furnishing goods. This action occurred only a few hours before Mr. Hill died of natural causes following an extended illness. 147 He and his wife, the former Miss Pauline Allen of Smithville, were the parents of Virginia (Mrs. R. S. Broadhurst), Bela (Mrs. W. D. Moreland), Allen, Eugene, Judson and J. D. Hill.

The collapse of the complicated combination of enterprises of which Colonel Hawkins had been the guiding genius brought despair not only to those associated with him in their operation, but also to a large segment of the population of southwest Georgia. Families were suddenly penniless, widows and children were bereft of their savings, and the entire economy of the area was in danger of complete collapse.

There were hints of grave irregularities in the operation of the Americus Investment Company, the holding company for the railroad and other businesses. Apparently, however, the entire SAM empire collapsed largely as a result of the severe economic panic which swept the country in 1893.

Some of the officials of the Americus Investment Company, distressed at the course of events, placed much of their own property at the disposal of the receiver. J. J. Williford, a director and one of the principal stockholders, voluntarily sacrificed his entire personal fortune in an effort to relieve the tragic plight of some of the smaller stockholders.¹⁴⁸ He sold his home to B. P. Hollis,¹⁴⁹ whose Church Street residence had recently been destroyed by fire, and moved to Atlanta in an effort to recoup his fortune.

Colonel Hawkins was reported to have put nearly one million dollars of his own money into the SAM road in an attempt to save it.¹⁵⁰ Reduced in circumstances, he moved from his magnificent Lee Street residence to a small cottage on Hampton Street, but he did not dispose of his old home (previously noted as the residence of General Howell Cobb).¹⁵¹ Subsequently he again was recognized as a wealthy man, largely, it is presumed, through the rich returns from vast stretches of Clinch County timberlands in which he had invested heavily during the 'Eighties and 'Nineties.¹⁵²

Meanwhile, the people of the town scheduled a mass meeting at which to consider their plight.

"The people of this section are awake to the alarming condition of affairs that now confronts them, and are preparing to act in unison for the public good. . . .

"Hundreds of cotton bales poured into Americus today, and each of the several warehouses presented a busy appearance. . . . The local currency issued by the banks of this city in the form of certificates is readily accepted by farmers in payment for cotton, and is doing much to relieve the situation. . . ."¹⁵³

In their efforts to obtain new residents to boost the economy, a group of citizens employed one C. R. Camp to bring in excursion trains loaded with people from the North and the West. In citing his qualifications for the job, Mr. Camp stated that by his own efforts two hundred thousand people had settled in Kansas in a seventeen-year period. One immediate result of his salesmanship was the arrival of a "first-class whiskey distillery," which located in Magnolia Dell.¹⁵⁴ Few new residents were obtained, however, in those uncertain days.

Americus was not alone in its time of trouble; the entire country was suffering through what came to be known as the Panic of '93. The town would not admit defeat. Though spiritually and financially depressed, its citizens moved from the collapse of a golden era with determination and cooperation.

As the year 1893 drew to a close, Americus was deeply cognizant of the financial losses that had beset it at the end of a decade of unparalleled growth and prosperity. But, as in other times, the greatest losses were

the good and useful citizens who had answered the final call.

Colonel Timothy Mathews Furlow, long one of the town's best-loved and most distinguished citizens, died on December 2, 1890. He was married three times and had a large number of children. By his first wife, the former Miss Charlotte Mary Lowther of Jones County, he was the father of Captain William L. Furlow, who lost his life in the Civil War. By his second wife, the former Miss Margaret Holt of Bibb County, Colonel Furlow was the father of Nellie (Mrs. James Callaway), Kate (Mrs. Merrel Callaway), Hallie (Mrs. A. D. Gatewood) and Captain Charles T. Furlow. His children by his third wife, the former Miss Louise Boring of Americus, were Lizzie (Mrs. David Rodgers), James W., Timothy McBride and Stewart D. Furlow.155

"Col. T. M. Furlow is dead. Crowned with the weight of years well spent and all the honor and respect which those who know him best could bestow (upon) him, he has lain himself down to his last sleep. A noble heart is still. A voice which ever had a kind word to utter is silent. One of the greatest minds that every advised the people of Georgia is darkened Colonel Furlow was an active champion of the interests of Americus.. and often did he forsake his own affairs to assist in something that looked to the advancement of his town.... He was a man of unbounded liberality.. In the days of his wealth he gave lavishly and later he gave as best he could...."156

Judge Willis Alston Hawkins, distinguished Confederate officer and former associate justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, died on November 28, 1886. He was the father (by his first wife) of Eugene A., (and, by his second wife, of) Annie Lewis (Mrs. Theron N. Hawkes), Mattie (Mrs. A. C. Bivins), Ella (Mrs. A. D. McKenzie), Willis A. and Augustus L. Hawkins. 157

Benjamin Pullum Hollis, known both as Captain Hollis (from his service with the Home Guards) and as Colonel Hollis, (in deference to his personal stature), died suddenly on May 12, 1893.

"He served his country well in war and peace and was admired by hundreds who regret his death.....one of the leading members of the Americus bar....., he was attorney for the Georgia Loan and Trust Company and the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery railroad and stood in the foremost ranks of the lawyers of this section.

"Col. Hollis was born in Monroe County in 1844. He graduated with first honor from the State University in the class of '68, afterwards studying law under Hon. Charles T. Goode. He was the law partner of Speaker Crisp when the latter was appointed judge of the Southwestern circuit. He had lived in Americus since 15 years of age, at which time he went to war with Cutts' 'Flying' Artillery.....158

Surviving were the widow, the former Miss Florence Davenport, and seven children: Mattie (Mrs. Frank Lanier), Virginia (Mrs. Charles R. Crisp), Florence (Mrs. Judson Hand), Kate (Mrs. Grantland Rice), Elizabeth (Mrs. Tom Vereen), Fred and Walter Ben Hollis. There also was a posthumous daughter, Mildred (Mrs. Kenneth Luthy). 159

Mrs. Mary Jane Ansley, a widely beloved Americus woman, died on November 27, 1893. "Beautiful and gentle....there was a simplicity and sincerity of manner adorning her lovely character that was ever attractive. She was a shining light of gentleness among her neighbors...and never did she turn a deaf ear to distressed humanity..." She was the third wife of Thomas Wesley Ansley and the mother of Mary, Annie, Charles, Oscar and Edgar Ansley. Mrs. Ansley was the daughter of Hodijah Elam and his first wife, the former Miss Mary Davenport. 160

Mr. Elam, a twenty-five year resident of Americus, had died on April 29, 1883, leaving his second wife and seven children in addition to Mrs. Ansley. A native of Chesterfield County, Virginia, where he was born on January 27, 1804, ".....He was a good, quiet and honest man, a citizen whose character would be an honor to any city." 161

Edgar Gazaway Simmons, brilliant attorney, eloquent speaker and distinguished legislator, died on December 10, 1891 at the age of thirty-nine years. His wife was the former Miss Lucy Hollis, daughter of John Floyd and Susan Cherry Hollis. The late Howell Blandford Simmons was a child of this union. 162

On October 21, 1891, "....Aunt Dolly Doe, colored, died at the home of her son in the new Twenty-sixth district....at the ripe age of 105 years and 17 days.....She worked and made her own living up to the time of her death." 163

Chapter VIII

A QUIET INTERLUDE

(1894 - 1899)

Americus in the 'Nineties was a place of charm and tranquility. It had a population of six thousand persons, most of whom led pleasant, unexciting lives. Their world consisted almost entirely of the routines established in business and in the home. Family life was close knit and children invariably spent much of their time participating in activities involving their immediate family and a large circle of aunts, uncles, cousins and "kissin' cousins" - remote relatives who were always regarded as a part of the family.

The streets were not yet paved; they were muddy and rutted in winter, hard and dusty in summer. Buggies and wagons rolled along them in pursuit of business and pleasure. The more stylish folk kept carriages, victorias and landeaus, which were driven by top-hatted Negro coachmen. Servants were plentiful and very cheap. The average upper class household had a cook, a yardman-coachman, and a nurse for the children. The easy-going, deferential relationship of the pre-war years continued and the "darkies" addressed their employers as Massa (or Cap'n.) and Missus.

Americus was proud of its new fire house and of the several volunteer fire companies. The latter rushed to the scene of a fire as soon as the bell in the Presbyterian steeple sounded the alarm. Reel stations were located at strategic intervals around town, one of them being on Captain Cobb's lawn at the southeast corner of College Street and Hancock Avenue.¹

The first paid fire department came into being soon after Americus joyfully celebrated the election of a Democratic President, Grover Cleveland. To honor him and his vice-president, Adlai Stevenson, the city fathers named the two new fire horses Cleveland and Stevenson.²

A number of Americus men played important roles in judicial and political affairs around the turn of the century.

William A. Dodson, son of Attorney James Dodson, represented Sumter County in the legislature for the terms beginning in 1893 and in 1895. In the session of 1896-97, he was speaker pro-tem of the house of representatives. Elected to the senate in 1897, he served as president of that body in the session of 1898-99. He introduced and ably championed to enact the Dodson Insurance Act, a law that compels insurance companies doing business in Georgia to pay the full amounts of claims without attempting to negotiate compromises or partial payments.³ As president of the senate, he presided at the joint session of the General Assembly which honored Lieutenant Thomas M. Brumby, Admiral Dewey's flag officer who had raised the Stars and Stripes over Manila, in the course of Georgia's magnificent tribute to the gallant officer.⁴

Mr. Dodson was born in Marion County on May 12, 1864. He was graduated by the University of Georgia in 1882, served two years as high school principal in Montezuma, and was admitted to the bar in 1884. His wife, whom he married on October 30, 1889, was the former Miss Martha Lewis, daughter of John F. and Lavinia (Butts) Lewis of Hawkinsville. They were the parents of Mattie Lewis (Mrs. A. O. B. Sparks), Georgia Bena, and William A. Dodson, Jr.⁵

In 1896 Americus furnished its second associate justice to the state supreme court when William Hansell Fish was elected for a two-year short term. Subsequently he was re-elected for full terms in 1898 and in 1904. Upon the death of Chief Justice Thomas J. Simmons in 1905, he was appointed to the court's highest office.⁶

Mr. Justice Fish was born in Macon on May 12, 1849, son of Judge George W. and Martha (Hansell) Fish. He was graduated by the University of Georgia in 1869 and later studied law at the University of Virginia. In 1871 he was admitted to the bar at Oglethorpe, where he had been reared, and from 1877 to 1891 he served as judge of the Macon (County) Superior Court. Following his election to the bench of the Southwestern Circuit in 1891, he moved to Americus and there he maintained his residence for the remainder of his life. His wife was the former Miss Mary P. Hines of Sandersville, and their only child, Nina, became the wife of Henry S. McCleskey of Americus.⁷

On December 10, 1896, the General Assembly elected Zera Alphonso Littlejohn to succeed William H. Fish on the bench of the Southwestern Circuit. A native of Culloden, a village in Monroe County, he was born on April 30, 1861, son of the Reverend Jesse R. and Sophie (Weston) Littlejohn. Admitted to the bar in 1883, he practiced in Cusseta, Cordele and Americus. His wife, to whom he was married on November 17, 1885, was the former Miss Minnie Shipp, sister of J. E. D. Shipp of Americus. They were the parents of Charles M., Clotilde (Mrs. Hair), Mary (Mrs. Ernest Statham), Weston, Wilmot and Zera A. Littlejohn, Jr.⁸

Frank Arthur Hooper, a native of Floyd County, became solicitor-general of the Southwestern Circuit on January 1, 1897. Previously he had served as solicitor of Sumter Superior Court. He was born on October 20, 1866, son of Benjamin F. and Christine (Fort) Hooper. A graduate of Mercer University in the class of 1885, he was admitted to the bar in 1886. He practiced law in Americus from 1889 to 1909, after which he moved to Atlanta. His wife, to whom he was married in 1888, was the former Miss Lena Callaway, daughter of Thomas M. and Mary (Long) Callaway of Cuthbert.⁹ Their Americus residence was the East College Street house subsequently owned by the late Mrs. W. D. Moreland.

Robert Lee Maynard, a native of Monroe County, became judge of Sumter Superior Court in 1895 and served in that capacity for five years. He was born on January 25, 1867, son of William T. and Martha (Dewberry) Maynard. He attended the University of Georgia briefly, but withdrew and took an LL. B.

degree from the Lumpkin Law School in 1890. He formed a partnership in Americus with W. T. Lane and Frank Hooper, both of whom soon withdrew and left him to practice alone. His wife, whom he married on December 18, 1890, was the former Miss Susan Sheppard, daughter of Charles and Elizabeth (Davis) Sheppard. Their only child died at the age of two years.¹⁰

In 1895 Americus acquired a new mayor in the person of James Augustus Hixon, who succeeded Colonel A. S. Cutts. He was born in Ellaville on October 22, 1868, son of James A. and Hartie Belle (Killebrew) Hixon. Following his graduation in law by the University of Georgia in 1888, he began the practice of his profession in Americus. Mr. Hixon served as county attorney, judge of Sumter Superior Court and, subsequent to his three-term tenure as mayor, as Sumter's representative to the General Assembly. His wife, to whom he was married on November 30, 1892, was the former Miss Leila Watts, daughter of Harrison D. Watts of Americus. Their only child, Mary Belle Hixon, became successively the wife of Harry Hawkins and of J. Lewis Ells.¹¹

DEATH OF CHARLES F. CRISP

Americus was plunged into deepest mourning on October 23, 1896, when news reached it of the death in Atlanta of Representative Charles F. Crisp. The former speaker of the House of Representatives died at the conclusion of a strenuous campaign for election to the senate seat made vacant by the resignation of General John B. Gordon. He had won a popular majority of votes, and was awaiting confirmation by the General Assembly when death intervened. His son, Charles R. Crisp, received an interim appointment to fill his seat in Congress.¹²

The body of the great man lay in state in Georgia's capitol for a short time, after which it was placed upon a special train and transported to Americus. At stations along the route, vast crowds assembled and often insisted that the casket be opened so that they might once more behold the features of one of Georgia's most distinguished citizens.

In Americus, where Mr. Crisp was respected for his great achievements and loved for his affectionate and generous nature, emblems of mourning were profusely displayed upon every public building and upon many business establishments and private residences. His grieving neighbors affixed to the front gate of his home a floral message which spelled out the words "His Oh Hme!"¹³

A funeral service was held at the First Methodist Church at three-thirty o'clock on the afternoon of October 25. As the hour for the service neared, every bell in the town tolled a solemn requiem. The funeral oration was delivered by General Clement A. Evans, while the Reverend T. M. Christian of the Methodist church, the Reverend Leroy Henderson of the Presbyterian church, and the Reverend Mr. Turpin of the Baptist church read Scripture selections and offered a prayer. The auditorium was packed with hundreds of admirers of the deceased, including a large contingent of state and national figures.¹⁵ Interment was made to the left of the Church Street entrance to Oak Grove Cemetery.

Many tributes were paid to the life and character of Charles Frederick Crisp, but one had an eloquence that set it above all others. Said Representative George L. Willington of Maryland in the course of a memorial service in the House of Representatives on January 16, 1897:

"... The annals of a nation are written in the biography of its great men. The mass of the people have no history. The record of their lives is short and simple, and remains ever the same. They are born, they live, they die, and are forgotten; generation after generation meets the same fate. ... But there are men who, by the force and power of talent or genius, indomitable will, or never-ceasing perseverance, lift themselves above their fellows, and in the record of their lives write history for their people. Such a man was Mr. Crisp. Not a brilliant man, perhaps; not one whose name will flash with a lustrous light, for he did not live in a time when splendid effulgence reigned. Yet when the records of this commonplace period of American national life is made up, his figure will stand out in bold relief as one who stood by his section, who partook of the bitterness of sectional strife, and yet was broad enough to rise above rancor, and developed into a national character, which, though tinged with sectionalism, grew gradually until he reached the loftier elements of patriotism, humanity, and a gentleness rarely observed among men. ..." ¹⁶

On the evening of February 21, 1897, forty-three members of the Baptist church met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Stewart for the purpose of considering the organization of a second church of that denomination. One week later the group assembled again and formally organized the Furlow Lawn Baptist Church. The name derived from the location chosen for the church edifice, a lot at the southeast corner of Lee and College streets which adjoined the residence of W. D. Bailey. The entire block was known as Furlow Lawn, a name which originated when it was the lawn surrounding Colonel T. M. Furlow's home. ¹⁷

The new church was duly constituted at services held in the council chamber at the city hall on March 7. The Reverend W. L. Cutts, a son of Colonel A. S. Cutts, delivered a sermon on the subject, "Pleasing Christ Our Aim." The new frame structure was occupied on the first Sunday in June. The Reverend Robert L. Bivins, a native of Cusseta and a cousin of Mrs. S. H. Hawkins, served as pastor for nineteen years from that date, and under his leadership the membership was increased to four hundred and seventy-one persons. ¹⁸

The first person to be baptized into the church was Mrs. W. T. Lane. Judge Frank A. Hooper was the first Sunday School superintendent, Mrs. John T. Clark was the first president of the Woman's Missionary Society, and V. C. Milton was the first president of the Young People's Prayer Meeting. ¹⁹

The Friendship Baptist Church was organized on August 11, 1895, by a group of Americus Negroes of that denomination. The church building, located on the east side of Cotton Avenue in the block to the north of the Allen House, was remodeled in 1911. At that time the Reverend J. D. Davis was pastor and the trustees were C. H. Lyons, A. Fay, D. D. Simpson, C. L. Darden and B. R. Smith. ²⁰

Another new church of this period was organized by a dozen members of the Methodist persuasion. They took the name Lee Street Methodist Church, and set about to construct a house of worship on the southeast corner of Lee and Burke streets. The first two circles of the Woman's Missionary Society were named Cora Ansley, for Mrs. E. D. Ansley, and Lou Furlow, for Colonel T. M. Furlow's widow. Both women were noted for their selfless devotion to their church.

On May 17, 1895, the property and franchises of the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway were sold at public auction to John W. Middendorf, Richard B. Sperry, John L. Williams, John Skelton Williams, John M. Nelson, Ernest Stump and J. W. Deming. They, in turn, conveyed the property and franchises to the Georgia and Alabama Railway on July 27. The principal office of the road remained at Americus until January 1, 1899, after which it was located at Savannah. On February 20, 1902, the property and franchises were sold to the Seaboard Air Line Railway.²¹

In 1897, while the road was owned by the G & A, a small passenger station was constructed on the west side of Jackson Street at the intersection of Finn Street. After some years this building served an increasingly small number of passengers, and in 1952 it was torn down.²²

Americus lost one of its most forceful financial institutions when the Georgia Loan & Trust Company was moved to Macon in 1895. With it went a score of outstanding citizens, headed by President O. A. Coleman and his family.²³

The institution had been the second strongest bank in town, according to figures compiled by the state treasurer for the year ending September 30, 1894:

Bank of Southwestern Georgia - Reserve & Liabilities -	\$350,270.30
Georgia Loan & Trust Company - " " " -	181,460.13
Bank of Commerce - " " " -	151,984.72
Planters Bank - " " " -	131,451.57
Bank of Sumter - " " " -	97,024.57 ²⁴

In 1897, John Wright Wheatley was elevated from a vice presidency to the presidency of the Bank of Southwestern Georgia, succeeding Major M. Speer, who resigned because of failing health.²⁵ Two years later a branch of this bank was opened at Ellaville.²⁶

Americus acquired several additional newspapers in this period. One of these, The Penny Press, was published for only a short time beginning in 1894.²⁷ Another, The Americus Press, was inaugurated late in 1899 and published for two or three years.²⁸ A third daily newspaper, the Americus Evening Herald, was published by W. K. Wheatley and Arch R. Eldridge for some dozen or more years, beginning in 1895, while a Republican weekly, The Georgia Investigator, lasted only a year or two.²⁹ At the same time, the Americus Times-Recorder (popularly known as the "T-R") continued to

In 1898 the eighth annual reunion of Confederate veterans from throughout the South was held in Atlanta. Some seven thousand of the greying warriors marched in a gala parade down Peachtree Street. General John B. Gordon, commander-in-chief of the United Confederate Veterans, proudly rode at the head of the column of ex-soldiers, despite the heaviest rainfall in Atlanta's history. A bevy of Southern beauties rode in closed carriages at the head of the units for which they had been named sponsors. Among these were Miss Berta Crisp, maid of honor for the Third Congressional District,³⁰ and Miss Maggie Chapman, sponsor for Camp Sumter Number 642. In addition to these Americus belles, there was Miss Frances Griffin of Atlanta and Washington, fiancee of former Americus resident Arthur Williford, who rode as sponsor for the R. E. Lee Camp of Washington, D. C.³¹ A large group of Americus veterans and their friends went to Atlanta for the festivities.

The Ladies' Memorial Association of Americus had been saving money for many years for the purpose of erecting a suitable monument in honor of Sumter's Confederate dead. Finally, in 1899, they ordered a handsome monument at a cost of \$1800 and placed it upon a pedestal in Oak Grove Cemetery. The officers of the Association in that year were Miss Maria Harrold, president; Miss Mary Granberry, vice president; Mrs. Lucy Mid Taylor, secretary and treasurer, and Mrs. Mattie Bivins Cobb, historian.³²

In 1896 Americus was swept by a wave of diphteria. The first local application of an anti-toxin for that illness was administered in the fall of the year. Recognizing the need for an adequate hospital, two Americus physicians, Dr. John Darby and Dr. W. S. Prather, organized Elmwood Sanitarium in 1897. A year later the town was ravaged by an epidemic of smallpox and typhoid fever, and the little hospital's facilities were sorely taxed. The vision of the two doctors paved the way for the excellent institutional medical care that later was to be available to the people of Americus and Sumter County.³³

Dr. William Stuart Prather, then in the early morning of a career that was to be a blessing to his community for nearly fifty years, was a newcomer to Americus. A native of Harlem, in Columbia County, he was born on March 11, 1868, son of Edward and Mary E. Prather. He was a brother of James Edward Prather, who later became a druggist in Americus. Young William attended the local schools, after which he worked on his father's farm six days a week and spent Saturdays and a part of Sundays clerking in a local drug store. Deciding that he wanted to become a doctor, he enrolled in the state university's medical college at Augusta. Upon graduation he returned to Harlem and began the practice of his profession. There he spent much of his time in traveling by buggy across icy or muddy roads as he made the rounds of his impecunious patients. The financial reimbursement was meager, but the experience and personal satisfaction gained must have been rewarding for the kindly young physician.³⁴

ANTE-BELLUM HOME of Thomas Harrold, southeast corner of College Street and Harrold Avenue. Erected 1855 by John W. Brim; torn down 1940.



FIRST BRICK HOUSE in Americus, northwest corner of Church and Jackson Streets. Built for Major M. Speer, 1868. Photo made prior to demolition, 1939.

VICTORIAN RESIDENCE of W. D. Bailey, next to southeast corner of Lee and College Streets. Erected 1891; razed 1960. The second Mrs. Bailey is shown in this turn-of-the-century view.



In 1895 Dr. Prather moved to Americus and established his family and his office in the former home of Dr. Charles Brooks, on Furlow Lawn. When he failed to get a single patient in a period of three months, he found himself facing destitution. Then one day the fire wagon crashed while rounding the corner of Lamar and Jackson streets as it raced to a fire at the SAM depot. Dr. Prather was called to treat two firemen who were injured in the accident, for which the city paid him one hundred and fifty dollars. Thus was begun a notable career of service which has never been surpassed in the annals of Americus.³⁵

Dr. Prather's wife, whom he married on November 25, 1889, was his childhood sweetheart, the former Miss Martha LaFils Roebuck of Harlem. Their children were Clara Willie (Mrs. Charles Hudson), Albert, McCord and Stuart Prather.³⁶

On October 9, 1897, a charter was obtained for an Americus chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, an organization devoted to memorializing the heroes of the Confederacy. One of its first projects was the purchase of a white marble statue of a Confederate solider, which was placed in the middle of the intersection of Lee and Forsyth streets. A few years later the Ladies' Memorial Association merged with the local chapter of the UDC.³⁷

First officers of the Americus Chapter were Mrs. Allen Fort, president, and Miss Flora Bacot, vice president. Subsequent presidents were: Mrs. James A. Davenport, Mrs. James Taylor, Miss Rosalie Smith, Mrs. J. E. Mathis, Mrs. Frank Cato, Mrs. Frank Harrold, Mrs. E. L. Carswell, Mrs. James Harris, Mrs. Charles L. Ansley, Mrs. Henry Clay and Mrs. E. L. Carswell (second term, 1931).³⁸

A relatively small number of men left Americus in 1898 for service in the Spanish-American War. One of the units composed of local men which went to Cuba was Company H, Third Regiment, Georgia Infantry, U. S. Volunteers. Its personnel included Captain Charles E. Van Riper, Sergeant John L. Wooten, Artificer Joseph W. Witt, Corporal Marcellus E. Morgan, and Privates Stewart D. Furlow, Jesse L. Hawkins, Bob Raiford and N. H. White.³⁹

Americus acquired a new wholesale grocery business in 1898 when George W. Glover established the Glover Grocery Company. He had recently sold his interest in the Americus Grocery Company to Frank Lanier for a reported price of \$37,000. Mr. Glover was president of the new concern and his son, Carr S. Glover, was vice president.⁴⁰ As previously noted, Mr. Glover had been in the grocery business since 1871.

The entire community was saddened on April 16, 1895, when it learned of the death of Mrs. Annie (Ansley) Bailey, first wife of W. D. Bailey. Reported the local correspondent for The Macon Telegraph:

"Americus society and many friends of the lady were shocked this morning by the news of the death of Mrs. Annie Bailey, wife of one of the most prominent businessmen of this city. . . . In the death of Mrs. Bailey a husband, children and home are bereft of a loving, tender wife and mother, and Americus of one of its most estimable women."

"Popular in social circles, noted for her lovable character manifest in all the relations of life, never shirking her social duties, yet it was in her home, with husband and children, that she shone, and these were her chief care. Her virtues as a wife and mother will be her truest monument." ⁴¹

A distinguished church, civic, business and social leader departed the local scene on December 10, 1898, when death claimed Major Moses Speer. The former president of the Bank of Southwestern Georgia died following a long period of failing health. He was survived by his second wife and their three children: May(Mrs Charles L. Ansley) and Carrie Speer of Americus, and Eustace Speer of Atlanta. ⁴²

Seth Kellum Taylor, a pioneer citizen and patriarch of a well-known Americus family, died in 1895 at the age of eighty-three years. A native of Pulaski County, he had lived in early manhood upon his plantation in Lee County. Following his removal to Americus he built a large house on a rural road east of the community, which later was named Taylor Street in his honor. Mr. Taylor was married three times. His first wife, to whom he was wed in 1830, was the former Permilia Ann Coley, of Pulaski County; his second bride was Miss Amanda E. M. Porter of Baker County, the ceremony taking place in 1837, and his third wife was Miss Harriett L. Van Valkenburg, originally of New York City, whom he married at Macon in 1858. Seth Taylor's children were: Nancy (Mrs. McDaniel Oliver), Cherry Ann (Mrs. Erasmus L. Collier; later Mrs. Wilburn), Ezekial, Thomas Kellum, Augustus, Isaiah, Jesse, Mary Elizabeth and Lucy (Mrs. John B. Felder). The third Mrs. Taylor was a sister of Mrs. W. D. Haynes and Mrs. D. K. Brinson, and an aunt of Mrs. Arthur Rylander, all of Americus. ⁴³

Chapter IX

A FREE AND HAPPY TIME

(1900 - 1916)

Americus and Sumter County entered the new century in the confident expectation that they would grow and prosper as never before. In seventy years they had progressed from a remote backwoods area to a position among the leaders in agriculture and business. The town, at least, had acquired some of the culture and polish that can exist only when elementary economic pressures are not present.

As the new year began, Americus had a population of 7,647 persons. The combined population of the town and the surrounding area totaled 10,552 persons. The town had five schools, ten churches, two hotels, an opera house and many fine residences. The county courthouse was valued at \$35,000, the jail was worth \$15,000 and the three-story Post Office building always excited comment because of its height and its marble facade.¹

In addition to four banks with a capital of \$300,000, five life insurance agencies and four fire insurance representatives, Americus had the following large business concerns: the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Shops (employing 300 hands), a horse collar factory, a sash and blind factory, a guano factory, a cotton seed mill, a variety works, an iron foundry, and two wagon and buggy factories. There also were five small boot and shoe makers.²

Sumter County's population in 1900 was 26,212 persons. There were 294,768 acres of improved land and 283 acres of virgin forest. The latter was badly cut over, but considerable yellow pine still remained. The seven saw mills in the county annually turned out \$20,000 worth of lumber from yellow pine trees. There were fourteen grist mills, ten of which were operated by water. In the season 1899-1900, some 25,000 bales of cotton were ginned in the county. The aggregate value of whole property was \$4,703,318.³

The price of cotton, which had dropped to less than five cents in 1898, gradually climbed to twelve cents in 1903. From then until 1914 it averaged eleven cents.⁴

As evidence of Americus' growth, telephone service was reaching more people than ever before. It was still something of a novelty, but more and more homes and business establishments had one of the new-fangled instruments on their walls. Early in the new century a line was established between Americus and Ellaville.⁵ Despite these advances, however, the service still left much to be desired. The situation prompted U. B. Harrold, who had originated the first local telephone service, to write an indignant letter to a Southern Bell official in Atlanta:

"The local service is getting to be as bad as it ever was. They have an indefinite number of no account cords, which will convey about three words in ten. . . . It is a constant and unbearable annoyance, and the complaint is getting to be universal with everybody in the community. . . . Hardly a day passes that I do not, two or three times during the day, have to interrupt a conversation, to call up Central, and tell her to throw that old cord in the St. and give me a better connection. I hear it on all sides.

"Another trouble is that some of your operators have great trouble in hearing the calls, they will ask you the number right over and over as often as three to five, or six times, and that is the case right here in my office, where we certainly know how to talk right into the telephone. The trouble is not with us, but it is with your office here. . .!"⁶

The local telephone office had been managed by several different men since its establishment. They were: J. Dudley Peacock, J. Epps Brown (he became president of Southern Bell in 1919), Carl Murphy, Elmer Gray and a Mr. Ferris. Later managers were Luther Hawkins, E. W. Tullis and Paul Westbrook, the latter of whom assumed the position in 1915.⁷

Postmaster John N. Scarborough had been succeeded in office by S. A. Smith in 1897. During the latter's administration, Congress appropriated \$40,000 for the establishment of rural mail routes throughout the country. Mr. Smith and Rural Carrier Henry Stanfield laid out a fifty-mile route on the periphery of Americus. Together they rode all of one day and one night in an open buggy to make what has been termed one of the first successful deliveries of rural mail in the United States. Upon Mr. Smith's death in 1912, he was succeeded by Frank P. Mitchell.⁸

There was considerable agitation for a new post office building. Finally the Government agreed that one was necessary, and sent an inspector down to examine the two principal sites under consideration. A letter written by U. B. Harrold in this connection gives an interesting picture of the situation. Writing to Reginald Huidekoper in Washington, D. C., under date of December 22, 1906, he said in part:

"Mr. Fred Prackett was here this week and made his examination of the Sites offered for the Post-Office Building.

"I regret to say that I am very much afraid the Bank of South Western Ga. have the 'bulge' on us, in the selection of the Site, mainly for the following reasons.

"First and foremost, they had all their arrangements made to extend the gentleman the utmost limit of courtesy and attention, taking him in a carriage ride all over the City with the Mayor and Mr. W. A. Dodson, who is a notorious politician and bro-in-law of Hon. E. B. Lewis, member of the House of Representatives from this District.

"They paid the gentleman a good deal of attention, spending a good portion of the time while he was here, in his company and carried delegations and committees and individual friends to meet him in his room in the Hotel, and urged the advantage of their Site over all others, and that Site being upon the public square immediately adjoining the Hotel at which he was stopping, and also just across the street from the City Hall and Court House, and one of the Banks it altogether, of course, presented an attractive view to the gentleman.

"This location, however, is six or eight times as far from the present location of the Post-Office, (where it has been for the past half century), as either of the sites I offer, and when it comes to the price, the idea of paying either \$11,500.00 or \$15,000.00 for either one of the sites offered by the Bank of South Western Georgia, as compared with \$3,600.00, the price at which I offered a site that I think is as good, and really much more convenient to the business men of the City, I can see no sound business reason for doing so. . . .

"The two sites offered by the Bank of South Western Georgia include nothing whatever but the bare ground for the corner lot. . . . Is there any sense or reason in the Government paying \$1,500.00 for a vacant lot . . . when they can buy a strictly first class corner lot in the same block where the Post-Office is now . . . for \$3,600.00, and this site right in the business center of the City, within 150 feet of what Mr. J. H. Wardke, Post Office Inspector, conceded to be the business center of the city.

"The only objection whatever that Mr. Prickett raised to our site was a question he asked me whether it was objectionable on account of Tenderloin district being in that vicinity. This was clearly to my mind instigated by some party interested in the other site, for the beginning of the Tenderloin occupancy is two long blocks from this site & there are very few of that class here & they are kept under close surveillance & control of the City Authorities & never give any trouble or annoyance on the public streets whatever.

"With all these facts before you I hope & trust you will make such presentation of the case to the proper authorities as will secure the final location of the building on the site offered by me for \$3,600.00."⁹

Despite Mr. Harrold's persuasiveness, the Government selected the site offered by the Bank of Southwestern Georgia. Thus passed from existence the last portion of the original town square, which was known in its last years as Windsor Park. The new post office building was occupied in 1910.¹⁰

The tragic Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago on December 30, 1902, was brought close to home when it was learned that an Americus girl was among the hundreds of victims. Sixteen-year old Miss Vera Goolsby died in the conflagration, while on a visit to her grandmother in the mid-West city. Her parents lived in the former James W. Furlow home on Lee Street.¹¹

In 1907 a building was erected for the Young Men's Christian Association on the northeast corner of Jackson and Church streets. Constructed of red brick, it had two large floors and a full above-ground basement. The board of directors of the YMCA was composed of C. P. Hammond, president; G. W. Bacot, vice president; G. M. Eldridge, treasurer; A. G. Miller, secretary; W. E. Brown, W. C. Carter, F. W. Griffin, F. A. Hooper, R. L. Maynard, T. H. McGillis, W. E. Staley, J. W. Shiver and W. P. Wallis. T. M. Limly was general secretary of the organization.¹²

FIRST METHODIST'S NEW BUILDING

On November 24, 1907, a new house of worship for the First Methodist Church was dedicated by Bishop James Atkins. The edifice had been completed in 1905, but its dedication had been delayed until all indebtedness was cancelled. Erected on the site of the earlier building at the southeast corner of Lee and Church streets, it was begun during the ministry of the Reverend W. L. Wootten and completed during that of his successor, the Reverend J. P. Wardlaw.¹³

Calvary Episcopal Church was without a rector for six months following the resignation of the Reverend W. Woodson Walker on June 1, 1897. Subsequently the parish was served by the Reverends W. H. Wootton (January and February, 1898), Sidney Beckwith (April and May, 1898), T. C. Tupper, D. D. (March through August, 1900), L. G. H. Williams (July through October, 1905), and James B. Lawrence, who arrived on December 1, 1905.¹⁴

In James Bolan Lawrence the vestry and parish acquired a rector who was to give Calvary church uninterrupted guidance for many years to come. A native of Marietta, he was born on January 2, 1878, a son of Robert de Treville and Annie Eliza (Atkinson) Lawrence. He was graduated by the University of Georgia with a bachelor of arts degree in 1898, followed by a master of arts degree in 1900. He entered the General Theological Seminary in New York City, by which he was awarded a bachelor of divinity degree in 1904. Following his ordination to the priesthood in 1903, he served for one year as assistant rector of Christ Church in Macon.¹⁵

For many years the Americus Library Association had desired to enlarge its quarters and make its facilities available to the general public. In 1908 that was made possible by a gift of \$20,000 from Andrew Carnegie, an Eastern steel tycoon. Accordingly, the Association was reorganized as the Carnegie Library Association and a two-story brick-and-granite structure was erected on the site of the earlier library. Officers of the association in that year were: Crawford Wheatley, president; Thomas Harrold, vice president; G. M. Eldridge, secretary, and W. H. C. Dudley, treasurer. Directors were: John A. Cobb, E. A. Hawkins, Charles L. Ansley, Lee Allen, E. A. Nisbet, Frank Sheffield, J. A. Davenport, J. E. Mathis and R. J. Perry.¹⁶

BRILLIANT IS SCENE OF CHURCH WEDDING

An Occasion of Prominence
Here.

THE ANDREWS-GOIN MARRIAGE

Most Elaborate and Beautiful in Americus in Years—Brilliant Reception at the Bailey Residence—Couple Go on a Bridal Tour.

Miss Laura Charlton Goin and Mr. Davis Ransom Andrews of Americus were married at the First Methodist church last evening at 8 o'clock.

Happiness was preeminently the characteristic of the occasion. It haloed itself in a soft, rich glow above the heads of the youthful lovers and infected itself throughout the magnificent assemblage of friends who came with fondness in their hearts to witness the plighting of their troth. It smiled and pulsated in great waves of melody from the patrician faces of the fashionable multitude present.

It nodded from the graceful foliage of the tropics which buried the altar in fathomless depth of green. It rang eloquently from the impressive words of the pastor, and shone softly from the myriad of electric globes, which filled the magnificent church with a flood of light.

And the smiles, the waving green, the spoken eloquence, the wealth of light, the unison of heart beats—all these varied forms and hues of happiness met and blended in an endless and beautiful benediction, the spirit of friendly greeting seemed to have united with nuptial joy, making all supreme the felicity of the interesting event.

All felt the omen, and the wedding picture under such a light was one of perfect loveliness.

The ushers were kept busy until the strains of the wedding march sounded. Quite a number of pews were reserved for the relatives and intimate friends, and many elegant costumes were conspicuous. The altar of the new Methodist church, one of the most superb edifices in the state, was artistically decorated with the most beautiful palms, plants and bright roses. This floral bower formed an exquisite background for the beautiful wedding scene.

Promptly at the appointed hour Lo-
heneran's wedding march, under the
skillful touch of Mrs. J. L. McNair,
announced the entrance of the bridal
party.

First came the ushers, who were Mr. J. G. Dodson, Mr. T. B. Hooks; Mr. Arthur Rylander, Mr. L. B. Small, Mr. G. M. Eldridge and Mr. W. G. Turpin. They took their positions each on opposite sides of the altar, fronting the minister.

The attendants entered in the following order: Miss Annie Council with Mr. Eugene V. Haynes, of Atlanta; Miss Mary Davenport with Mr. George Winship, of Atlanta; Miss Eva Hawkins with Rev. J. L. Irvin; Miss Elizabeth Harrold with Mr. J. E. Gyles; Miss Fannie Turner, of Atlanta, with Mr. Eugene Bailey; Miss Edith Thiot, of Savannah, with Mr. R. E. Lee.

They were followed by the prettily dressed flower girls, Misses Laura Ansley and Jessie Bailey.

Then came the beautiful and lovely Miss Barry, of Decatur, the one upon whom the bride had complimented with being her maid of honor. The wedding circle as arranged made a pretty picture which awaited the coming of the beautiful and queenly bride who entered on the arm of her father, Mr. W. D. Bailey, elegantly gowned as she was in a white crepe, a creation of much beauty and loveliness, garnished with the usual bridal veil.

The groom joined his bride, accompanied by his brother and best man, Mr. E. Y. Andrews.

The bride and groom stood immediately in the center of the wedding circle and Rev. J. P. Wardlaw eloquently performed the beautiful and impressive Episcopal ceremony, while the organ pealed forth "The Angels' Serenade." The bride, as she pronounced her wedding vows, was as daintily fair as the lillies she held in her hand.

The bridesmaids gowns were fashioned of the daintiest and sheerest material and was specially becoming to each style of beauty. They carried bouquets of pink roses tied with

The first marriage solemnized in the new First Methodist Church occurred on April 26, 1905. The Evening Herald's account of it, shown here, is a classic example of rapturous reporting.

satin streamers.

The bridal party passed out of the church to the favorite strains of Mendelsohn's wedding march.

A royal reception to the bridal party and large number of friends followed at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Bailey, 412 Lee street.

The decorations throughout the handsome home were mainly white and green. The color scheme of the dining room where the sumptuous wedding supper was served was in pink, and the handsomely carved oval table was covered with duchess lace over pink satin. The center piece was a handsome Venetian vase filled with ferns and pink roses, ancestral candelabras holding pink tapers with rose leaf shades, and bon bon dishes with pink candies completed the elegant table decorations.

The wedding presents, which represented a small fortune, were displayed in one of the apartments of the second floor. It is doubtful if a young couple in this city ever received as many beautiful remembrances. The gifts included silver, statuary, laces, furniture and many choice pieces of cut glass.

Amongst this handsome array was a chest of magnificent flat silver, a gift from Mr. Arthur Rylander, the life-long friend of the groom. In fact, Mr. Andrews has ever been the staunch friend of Mr. Rylander, and they have been in business together for years.

The bride is the daughter of Mrs. W. D. Bailey and has been a universal favorite both in this city and Atlanta. She is noted for her bright, sunny disposition and has ever been a welcome member to all social assemblages. The groom is an honored and prosperous young man who has made a firm place for himself in the business circles of Americus. He is very popular and a host of friends wish him and his beautiful young wife a long, prosperous and happy life.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrews left last night on a bridal trip to Florida. On their return they will be at home to their many friends at the handsome residence of Mr. Arthur Rylander on Taylor street.

Among the guests who came from a distance to attend the wedding were: Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Winship, Atlanta; Mrs. A. N. [illegible], Savannah; Geo. Winship, Jr., Miss Fannie Turner, Atlanta; Miss Edith Thiot, Savannah; Mr. H. E. Watkins, Miss Ruth Barry, Decatur; Mrs. N. W. Worrell, Cathcart; Mr. E. V. Haynes, Atlanta.

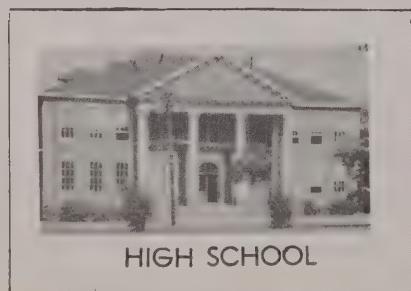
A new patriotic organization was added to the roster of local women's groups when the Council of Safety Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was organized in October 1908. Mrs. Howell Simmons was organizing regent and Mrs. James Taylor was the first recording secretary.¹⁷

In 1901 Eugene Alston Hawkins succeeded James A. Hixon as mayor of Americus. The only child of Willis Alston Hawkins' first marriage, he was born in Starkeville on March 21, 1850, and died in Americus on November 5, 1917. A graduate of the University of Georgia in the class of 1870, he entered the practice of law in Americus two years later. In 1870 he was married to the former Miss Mary Ann McCleskey, daughter of Dr. G. L. and Georgia (Washburn) McCleskey of Athens. Her brothers were Jeff McCleskey, who moved to Americus as a conductor for the SAM road, and Henry McCleskey. Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins were the parents of Eugene, Jr., Helen (Mrs. Will Hawkins), Willis, Georgia Lee (Mrs. T. M. Killen), Lucia (Mrs. Clarence White), Joseph, Mary (Mrs. John Sheffield), Robert, Sion, Harry and Benjamin Hollis Hawkins.¹⁸ Several years after Mrs. Hawkins' death in 1910, Mr. Hawkins married his secretary, Miss Willie Rutherford, who survived him.¹⁹

The next mayor was James Edward Mathis, who served in 1911 and 1912. He was a native of Buena Vista, where he was born on October 4, 1857, son of Major John Thomas and Rebecca (Slaughter) Mathis. A graduate of Peabody School in Nashville, he arrived in Americus in 1878 to become an instructor at Rylander Academy.²⁰ From 1897 to 1903 he served as superintendent of the Americus public schools.²¹ The next eight years were spent as an insurance agent, a job which he enjoyed because of his great liking for all kinds of people.²²

Professor Mathis was twice married. His first wife, to whom he was wed in 1878, was Miss Carrie Belle Rylander. She was a sister of Arthur Rylander and a niece of Dr. E. T. Mathis, the latter of whom was a cousin of her husband. Following her death in 1912, Professor Mathis was married in 1915 to Miss Ethel Gribbins of Arcadia, Florida, originally of Cleator Moor, England. Mr. Mathis, who died on July 28, 1951, was the father of eight children, all born of his first marriage. They were: Sarah, Emory, Walter, Rebecca, Lynn, Mary, Carrie Belle and James E. Mathis, Jr.²³

In 1912 J. E. Mathis was again named superintendent of the local school system, succeeding Augustus G. Miller, who had served in that capacity since 1904. A separate building for the high school had been erected in 1910 to accommodate the expanded public school enrollment. The site for the new building was on the west side of Rees Park, where J. J. Williford and A. A.



Willett had once manufactured bricks from clay dug on the property. The first principal of Americus High School was J. N. Haddock, and the original enrollment was 145 pupils.²⁴

With the removal of the high school classes to the new building, the original structure on Jackson Street was thenceforth devoted entirely to elementary classes. Thus, the first and second grades which had previously been housed in an old residence in Rees Park under the care of Miss Jennie Hollis and Miss Sarah Cobb,²⁵ were moved to the old Furlow building. In 1914 a new building was erected which incorporated a portion of the original college structure. Dr. Lansing Burrows was president of the Board of Education, Arthur Rylander was secretary, and Lee Allen was chairman of the building committee. In that same year, buildings for the East Americus and Prospect schools were erected,²⁶ the former on the north side of East Forsyth Street near Oak Grove Cemetery and the latter across McGarrah Street from the residence of Colonel W. T. Davenport in Brooklyn Heights.

Miss Sarah Wheeler, who had served as principal of Furlow Grammar School since 1910, was succeeded in 1912 by Miss Sarah Pope Cobb, daughter of Captain John A. Cobb. Miss Cobb, a fine teacher and administrator, was to continue at the helm of Furlow until her retirement in 1948.²⁷

In 1914 a long-familiar landmark was removed from the local scene when the 112-foot flagpole at Furlow school was dismantled. Erected in 1898 as a gift from Hal Johnson, a large-scale dealer in railroad cross ties, the century-old cypress staff was said to be the tallest one-piece flagpole in the world. Three railroad flat cars were required to haul it from Lulaville, near Fitzgerald, to Americus. The POS&A fraternity presented the school with a 20-foot bunting flag which was visible for miles around Americus. Today, the concrete base that supported the pole still stands in the Furlow schoolyard, a silent sentinel over generations of happy children.²⁸

An act of the Georgia Legislature in 1908 created in each of the twelve congressional districts an agricultural and mechanical college. As a result of the influence of several local citizens, the college for the Third District was located in Americus. The site chosen for the campus was a large tract of farm land at the eastern terminus of Glessener Street. Four buildings were constructed originally: a boys' dormitory, a girls' dormitory, a combination president's home and office building, and an academic building.²⁹

Professor John M. Collum, a resident of Putnam, was named first president of the institution. He installed a well-equipped workshop and hired capable instructors to teach farming and mechanics. Under his guidance the college's athletic teams built an enviable reputation throughout south Georgia.³⁰

Many Americus and Sumter County men rendered valuable assistance in the advancement of the Third District Agricultural & Mechanical School. When the institution encountered financial difficulty and was threatened with closure, however, it was largely through the efforts of Crawford Wheatley and Frank Lanier that it was enabled to continue its good work with the rural youth of the area.³¹

TWENTIETH CENTURY LEADERS

George Washington Council, president of the Planters Bank and a brother of M. B. Council, died in 1900 at the age of sixty-four years. He was succeeded in the bank's top post by his eldest son, Lee Council. Two other sons, Barlow and Charles M. Council, subsequently became officials of the institution. George W. Council and his wife, the former Miss Martha Caroline Barwick, were the parents also of two daughters: Lillie (Mrs. Albert F. Bellingrath) and Ann (Mrs. Coley J. Lewis). 32

Lee George Council was born near Americus on August 25, 1869. He had little formal education, but did attend Gatewood's Academy in Sumter County for several years. After working for several years in a cotton warehouse, where he demonstrated keen business ability, the young man established his own warehouse in partnership with T. B. Hooks. Later he became secretary and treasurer of the Americus Home Mixture Guano Company and owner of the Windsor Hotel. He was the first president of the Americus Board of Trade. 33

Mr. Council was married in 1900 to Miss Florence Hildreth, an alumna of Agnes Scott College. She was a daughter of Charles N. Hildreth of Live Oak, Florida, originally of New York. 34 When the young couple returned to Americus from their wedding trip, Mr. Council's parents entertained at an elaborate reception in their honor. The affair took place at the hosts' attractive home on the Oglethorpe Road 35 (subsequently the country home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Council and, later, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Gatewood, Jr.). Mr. and Mrs. Council were the parents of two daughters, Ruth and Elizabeth Council.

In 1905 J. W. Wheatley retired as president of the Bank of Southwestern Georgia. 36 He was succeeded by Albert W. Smith, long identified with the bank in a variety of capacities. On November 9, 1914, the Bank of Southwestern Georgia had reserves and liabilities of \$434,721.78. 37 On March 3, 1915, it was in the hands of a receiver 38 and its president was dead by his own hand after making an unsuccessful effort to obtain a loan from Atlanta banks. 39

A few years earlier, following closely upon the demise of the Bank of Sumter, a new bank had been organized under the name of Commercial City Bank. J. W. Wheatley was named honorary president 40 and Crawford Wheatley, principal owner, became operating vice president. In 1914 the bank's reserves and liabilities amounted to \$398,189.24. 41

William Harris Crawford Wheatley was born in Americus on December 6, 1866, son of John W. and Mary (Dudley) Wheatley. He was educated in the public schools of Americus and was graduated by LeHigh University with a degree in mechanical engineering. He became city engineer in 1887, superintendent of the Americus Oil Company in 1888, and a partner in the architectural firm of C. M. Wheatley & Company. In 1891 he became president of the Americus Refrigerating Company and vice president of the Americus

Construction Company, and in 1893 he was made a member of the firm of T. A. Klutz & Company, Architects. The years 1898-1901 were devoted to extensive travel in Europe and the West Indies. Upon his return to Americus, Mr. Wheatley became vice president of Sheffield-Huntington Company.⁴²

In addition to his business and financial positions, Crawford Wheatley was active in civic, political and social affairs. In 1912 he was president of the Carnegie Library Association, treasurer and fiscal agent of the Third District A & M School, and a lieutenant colonel on the staff of Governor Joseph M. Terrell. As a state senator in 1905-06, he authored the bill providing for a lieutenant governor. As a candidate for Congress in 1906, he withdrew from the race against Dudley Hughes and Elijah Lewis because of "unfair" treatment of the executive committee. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1908. Mr. Wheatley was a member of leading social clubs in Atlanta and New York, in addition to having numerous fraternal affiliations. He and his wife, the former Miss Helen Huntington, were the parents of Charles H. Wheatley.⁴³

In 1912 Charles R. Crisp was elected to Congress from the Third District. Since completing the three months remaining in his father's term in 1895-96, he had practiced law in Americus and served as judge of city court (1900-11). In 1911 he resigned to go to Washington to act as parliamentarian of the House of Representatives. At the Democratic Convention at Baltimore in 1912, he handed down a parliamentary decision which resulted in Woodrow Wilson's nomination for the presidency.⁴⁴

Mr. Crisp was born at Ellaville on October 19, 1870. After attending the public schools of Americus, he went to Washington at the age of nineteen to accept a job which his father obtained for him as a clerk in the Interior Department. When his father became speaker in 1891, he got a job in the House as parliamentarian, experting on rules, practices and precedents. After studying law on the side, he was admitted to the Georgia bar in 1895.⁴⁵

Charles Robert Crisp was twice married. His first wife was the former Miss Lucy Sheffield, daughter of J. W. Sheffield, who died in 1905.⁴⁶ On December 4, 1907, he married Miss Virginia Hollis, daughter of B. P. Hollis.⁴⁷ Mr. Crisp's only child to live to maturity was a son, Charles Frederick Crisp, who was born of the first marriage.

Succeeding Mr. Crisp as judge of city court was William Madison Harper, a native of Dawson. The latter was born on August 14, 1867, son of Francis Marion and Amanda (Watts) Harper. After attending school in Dawson, he was admitted to the bar in 1894. His wife, to whom he was married on August 1, 1894, was the former Miss Maggie Mae Smith of Atlanta.⁴⁸

In 1915 Americus acquired a new city recorder in the person of Thomas Oliver Marshall. A native of Cedartown, he was born on April 8, 1889, son of Stephen Francis and Mattie (Waddell) Marshall. He was awarded the bachelor of arts degree by Emory College in 1909 and the bachelor of laws degree by the University of Georgia in 1911. In the latter year he began the practice

of law at Quitman, moving to Americus eight months later. His wife, to whom he was married on November 14, 1916, was the former Miss Mattie Hunter, daughter of Dr. T. W. and Fannie (Rountree) Hunter of Quitman. Their children were Martha (Mrs. Wingate Dykes), Daniel and Thomas O. Marshall, Jr. Mr. Marshall was a Methodist, a Mason and a member of the Chi Phi fraternity. 49

Daniel Frederick Davenport became postmaster at Americus in 1913, succeeding Frank P. Mitchell. A son of Colonel W. T. Davenport, he was born in Americus on September 8, 1860. He attended Alabama Polytechnic Institute, but left in his senior year to become associated with his father and a brother, James A. Davenport, in the retail drug business. Twenty-eight years later he and the latter entered the real estate and insurance business together. Mr. Davenport was married on March 21, 1889, to Miss Leila Crisp, daughter of Charles F. Crisp. She was educated in the local schools and at Woman's College of Staunton, Virginia. Their children were Clara Belle (Mrs. Glenn Hooks), and Mary Ella Davenport (Mrs. Quimby Melton). D. F. Davenport was a member of the Methodist church and of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon social fraternity. 50

An Americus man, Thomas G. Hudson, was named Georgia's commissioner of agriculture in 1905. A native of Schley County, he was born on November 3, 1867, son of John N. and Amanda M. Hudson. His education was received in the county schools and at the South Georgia Male and Female College at Dawson. He represented Schley County in the state house of representatives, 1892-93, and in the senate, 1896-97 and 1902-04. Mr. Hudson's wife, to whom he was married on November 5, 1889, was the former Miss Kate Royal, daughter of Thomas and Josephine (Baisden) Royal of Schley County. Their children were Gertrude (Mrs. Carl Hawkins) and Charles Baisden Hudson. 51

Ten years after Mr. Hudson's appointment, Americus furnished the state's assistant commissioner of agriculture, Clifford C. Clay, Jr. Born in Lee County on January 6, 1881, he was a son of Clifford C. and Mary (Bryan) Clay. He was graduated by Gordon Institute and subsequently attended the University of Georgia and the Eastman Business College at Poughkeepsie, New York. After working in the East, he returned to Americus upon his father's death in 1903 and for the next twelve years managed the family plantations in Lee and Sumter counties. Upon relinquishing the post with the State Department of Agriculture some years later, he joined the staff of Chevrolet Motor Company in Atlanta and rapidly advanced to top executive positions. In 1908 he married Miss Zelda Martin, daughter of C. C. and Beulah (Battle) Martin of Columbus. They became the parents of ten sons and daughters. Mr. Clay was a Methodist, a member of the Phi Delta Theta social fraternity, and a former exalted ruler of the Americus Lodge of Elks. 52

In 1906 a newcomer to Americus became Georgia's first state veterinarian. That man was Dr. Peter F. Bahnsen, a native of Texas, who moved to

Americus in 1900 after the city's only veterinarian had joined the Army. He became the first president of the Georgia Veterinarian Medical Association in 1908 and, in 1913, he was named to the presidency of the U. S. Livestock Sanitary Association.⁵³ Dr. Bahnsen and his wife, the former Miss Beatrice Parrott,⁵⁴ were the parents of Johanna (Mrs. E. C. Veal), Beatrice (Mrs. Taylor-Nelson-Rushin), Edith, Sarah (Mrs. Frazier Eidson), Georgia (Mrs. Jack Fuson) and John Bahnsen.

Among other Americus men who figured in public life early in the Twentieth Century were Captain John A. Cobb and Dupont Guerry. The former was elected to the office of ordinary of Sumter County in 1905 and to the presidency of the State Agricultural Society in 1914.⁵⁵ The latter, then living in Macon, was an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1902; subsequently he was named president of Wesleyan College.⁵⁶

A new and useful citizen of this period was Quimby Melton, son of Georgia's future Poet Laureate, Dr. Wightman F. Melton. He served for several years as editor of the Americus Times-Recorder before moving to Griffin and becoming publisher of the Griffin Daily News. At the time of his arrival in Americus, the newspaper's equipment consisted of "one linotype, a shirt-tail full of type, and an old flatbed press that was powered by a gas-propelled one-lung motor." Most inconvenient of all, the Times-Recorder was a morning newspaper. This meant that Editor Melton was required to work at night, a circumstance which interfered considerably with his courtship of a local belle. He resourcefully solved the problem by publishing the paper in the afternoon, which left his evenings free. This strategy was enormously successful, and soon Postmaster D. F. Davenport's daughter, Mary Ella, had become Mrs. Quimby Melton.⁵⁷

One of the few Americus residents ever to have a book published was J. E. D. Shipp, whose Giant Days, or The Life and Times of William H. Crawford was printed locally in 1909. It represented the culmination of a life-long dream for Mr. Shipp, who stated that he had desired to write a biography of the illustrious statesman since early boyhood. He acknowledged the valuable assistance rendered by Mr. Crawford's grandsons, W. H. C. Dudley and W. H. C. Wheatley of Americus, in the preparation of the manuscript.—⁵⁸

A scholarly historian as well as a brilliant attorney and a noted bibliophile, Mr. Shipp was appointed historian of Sumter County.⁵⁹ Unfortunately for posterity, however, he never found time in the course of a long and busy life to record the story of Sumter's creation and development.⁶⁰

Americus lost one of its prominent physicians and surgeons when Dr. George Twiggs Miller moved to Macon circa 1912. A resident of Americus since 1888, he was a native of Aiken, South Carolina. He was born on September 8, 1853, son of Jonathan and Margaret (Smith) Miller. He was a graduate of Augusta Medical College in the class of 1877. On June 23, 1877, Dr. Miller was married to Miss Katie Killen, daughter of John and Ann (Cox) Killen of Perry. Their children were Annie (Mrs. Andrew Lyndon), William and Alexander Lawton Miller.⁶¹

In an effort to provide jobs for women of the community, Dr. W. S. Prather organized a small overall manufacturing business in 1906. This enterprise employed between twenty-five and thirty women. Eventually it was acquired by W. O. Barnett, who also manufactured saddles and horse collars. The latter moved the business to Macon⁶² in the 'Twenties, where its products later were diversified under the management of his son, Robert Barnett.⁶³

Dr. Prather, who had been one of the eleven original members of the Third District Medical Society when it was organized in 1910, was keenly aware of the need for increased hospital services for the people of the Americus area. The Americus and Sumter County Hospital Association had been organized in 1905 with Mrs. P. C. Clegg as president. It acquired the former home of Colonel T. M. Furlow, which by then had been moved to face on Barlow Street, and converted it into a hospital. This facility soon became inadequate to provide the kind of services needed by the people of the city and county.⁶⁴

A group of local doctors instituted a vigorous campaign to raise funds for the erection of a new and larger hospital. Dr. Prather contributed a large lot on the south side of West Dodson Street. There, on May 1, 1914, a new two-story brick edifice was dedicated.⁶⁵ The building committee consisted of Mrs. R. L. Maynard, chairman, Mrs. H. B. Mashburn and Mrs. George Van Riper.⁶⁶

Among other new buildings constructed in this period were: an addition to the Central of Georgia passenger station, 1900;⁶⁷ the Allison Building, a three-story structure of yellow brick, erected on Lamar Street across from the Windsor Hotel, 1907;⁶⁸ the Planters Bank Building, a four-story edifice of yellow brick, constructed on the southwest corner of Lee and Forsyth streets, circa 1910;⁶⁹ a two-story red brick Sunday school building for the First Baptist Church, erected on Taylor Street to the rear of the sanctuary, 1916.⁷⁰

Two groups of Americus Negroes put up new buildings early in the century. On June 22, 1900, St. Johns Lodge No. 17 F&AM laid the cornerstone of its two-story frame assembly hall on the south side of East Forsyth Street, just east of the old city cemetery. Officials of the lodge were: L. B. Hill, M. B. Phillips, W. G. Lewis, I. W. Smith, H. B. Smith, G. W. Phillips, George Moon, G. W. Rogers, J. W. Huguley, J. A. Jones, G. R. Ruffin and S. M. Nathan.⁷¹

In 1912 the congregation of Big Bethel Baptish Church moved into its new sanctuary, located on the site of the original building occupied by the Americus Presbyterian Church. Dr. J. J. Chisholm was pastor in that year and the trustees were: R. Britt, Henry Harris, Lott Lowry, Prince Ray, John Bridges, Charles Haynes, Henry Beniard, William Hardy, Jessie Walls, George Thomas, John Davis, Fred Campbell and Steve Lawson.⁷²

NEW RESIDENCES

Americus acquired several interesting new residences in the early years of the Nineteenth Century. William A. Dodson built a large two-story frame house on the northwest corner of Lee and Hill streets which was a familiar sight until it was demolished in 1954. On the lot adjoining this property to the north was erected a handsome two-story columned house which served successively as the residence of G. W. Glover, John Taylor, T. B. Hooks, Dr. Thad Wise and Dr. John Robinson. On a half-block tract on the northwest corner of Lee and Furlow streets a large two-story frame house was erected for George D. Wheatley, president of the Windsor Hotel Company. After standing vacant for a number of years because of difficulties in settling Mr. Wheatley's estate, this house was demolished in 1935. On the southwest corner of Lee and Furlow streets was built a one-story frame residence for druggist James Glenwell Dodson,⁷³ a brother of William A. Dodson. Some time after Mr. Dodson moved to Atlanta and became a multi-millionaire manufacturer of proprietary medicines,⁷⁴ the house was acquired and subsequently remodeled by Dr. H. A. Smith. The former Brown Street residence of Colonel A. S. Cutts was removed to a new site on Horne Street, and in its stead was erected an attractive two-story brick residence for John Sheffield.⁷⁵ Thomas Harrold, son of U. B. Harrold, built a handsome colonial-style house on the north side of College Street at the intersection of Harrold Avenue, which later was acquired by Philip Jones, a local automobile dealer.⁷⁶

The most beautiful new home of this period, and one of the finest ever built in Americus, was the two-story red brick residence erected for Lee Council in 1901. Situated on the north side of East Church Street at the intersection of Brown Street, it was located on the site of an earlier home of B. P. Hollis, which had burned in 1892. Occupying an eight acre tract of land extending through to Forsyth Street, the Council home was set far back from the street in a gently rolling lawn. The establishment also included a large brick stable and carriage house, a greenhouse, servants' quarters, a tennis court, and several lovely gardens set amid beautiful old trees. A great iron stag was a familiar ornament on the front lawn for almost forty years. The house itself featured a baronial hall which extended the entire width of the structure. At one end of the hall was a great Italian fireplace and at the other end was a "bride's stairway" which divided into two stairways at a wide landing dominated by Tiffany stained glass windows. In addition to the central hall, the downstairs area consisted of a reception



RESIDENCE OF LEE COUNCIL

hall, a drawing room, a music room, a library, a dining room decorated with hand-blocked wallpaper and imported Dutch tiles, a private telephone room, a serving room, a large kitchen and a rear gallery. Floors throughout the house were of hardwood parquetry.⁷⁷

A number of well known businesses came into being, were incorporated, or were re-organized between 1900 and 1916. Shiver Lumber Company was organized in 1900 by John W. Shiver, son of Captain John M. Shiver.⁷⁸ Americus Grocery Company was incorporated in 1901 with Frank Lanier as president, Rylander Shoe Company was incorporated in 1902 with Arthur Rylander as president, and Allison Furniture Company was incorporated in 1906 with R. E. Allison as president.⁷⁹ Eldridge Drug Company was incorporated in 1904 by G. M. Eldridge, W. E. Staley and E. L. Murray.⁸⁰ Following the deaths of Henry R. Johnson and U. B. Harrold, the Johnson & Harrold cotton warehouse business was reorganized in 1908 by Thomas and Frank Harrold as Harrold Bros. In 1913 W. D. Bailey Company was incorporated with W. D. Bailey as president, Eugene A. Bailey as vice president, and William F. Bailey as secretary and treasurer.⁸¹

In 1913 The South Georgia Progress, another in a long series of short lived local newspapers, was published in Americus.⁸²

Mayor M. M. Lowry, who had succeeded J. E. Mathis as the city's chief executive, was in turn succeeded by Lee Council.⁸³ In the latter's administration many of the streets in the business section were paved.⁸⁴ Shortly thereafter the pavement was extended several blocks out Lee Street. The bridge over the Seaboard tracks at Calvary Episcopal Church had been constructed under Mr. Mathis' administration.⁸⁵

The need for paved streets and roads was beginning to be an important issue in 1916. With the advent of motor cars, people had become more conscious of dust and mud than ever they had been while riding in carriages and buggies. As Sunday afternoon motoring came into vogue following



MOTORING IN A 1914 OLDSMOBILE

the appearance of the first automobiles, it was a usual experience for motorists to encounter other daring souls who were helplessly mired in the mud of the county's twisting roads.

Among the first automobiles owned in Americus were William Meriwether Jones' "Winston," W. D. Bailey's red "Maxwell," Frank Lanier's green "Maxwell," Macon Dudley's "Oldsmobile," and Elam Mauk's "Franklin."⁸⁶

The First Methodist Church was the scene of a beautiful wedding on April 11, 1906, when Miss Kate Hollis became the bride of Grantland Rice. The bride was a daughter of Mrs. Florence D. Hollis and the late Benjamin P. Hollis, and the bridegroom was a rising young newspaper man from Nashville, Tennessee. The bride was given in marriage by her brother-in-law, Judson L. Hand of Pelham. Bridesmaids included Miss Irene Hand of Pelham, Miss Annie Fitten of Atlanta, Miss Emma Dunbar of Augusta, and Miss Sara Morris of Americus. The ceremony was performed by the bride's uncle, the Reverend T. E. Davenport.⁸⁷

When a new county was created out of Dooly County in 1905, it was named in honor of the late Charles F. Crisp, of Americus. The first Ordinary of Crisp County was Captain S. W. Coney, who served until his death on January 16, 1916. A long-time resident of that part of Dooly which was made into Crisp, Captain Coney was well-known in Americus for his activities as a vice president of the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway.⁸⁸ He was the father of Mrs. George Oliver and a brother of Mrs. Perry C. Clegg, both of Americus.

Americus lost a useful citizen on August 1, 1903, when death claimed sixty-seven year old Ezekial Taylor. Long the proprietor of a Cotton Avenue farmers' supply store, he had in later years been in the building and loan business with Captain W. H. Allen. Mr. Taylor and his first wife, the former Miss Sue E. Hodges, were the parents of John, Will and Dr. Ezekial Taylor; he and his second wife, who had been Miss Mary James Brown, had seven children: Hattie (Mrs. H. P. Everett), Mary (Mrs. Hiram Gardner), Lizzie (Mrs. Dwight McCord), Laura (Mrs. Seymour Evans), Edwin, George and Adeline (Mrs. Joseph H. Bradford).⁸⁹ John Tomlinson Taylor, a son of the first marriage, was for many years a prominent Americus businessman. His wife, a gentle and beloved woman, was the former Minnie Allen, daughter of Captain W. H. Allen.

Henry Rogers Johnson, long-time business partner of both U. B. Harrold and his father, the original Thomas Harrold, died on December 5, 1904, at the age of seventy-four years. A native of Bibb County, he was for many years a prominent and respected citizen of Americus. He and his first wife, the former Miss Mary Hunt, were the parents of Laura (Mrs. Daniel W. Bagley) and Charles, while by a subsequent marriage to Miss Josephine Black, daughter of William A. Black, of Americus, he was the father of Lilla (Mrs. Norman C. Miller), Minnie, Walter, Helen, Corinne, Joseph, and Henry R. Johnson, Jr. Mr. Johnson's son-in-law, Daniel Webster Bagley, died in 1910 at the age of fifty-two years. Long a well known local businessman, he was a half-brother of Henry Clay Bagley.⁹⁰

Representative J. H. Lumpkin, Sumter's delegate to the General Assembly, died unexpectedly in 1905 at the age of forty-five years.⁹¹ A member of one of Georgia's most distinguished families, he had moved to Americus after some years spent in the practice of law at Ellaville. His wife, who also died in 1905, was the former Miss Georgia Glover, daughter of George W. Glover of Americus.⁹² They were the parents of Georgia (Mrs. Charles F. Crisp), Henry and George Lumpkin.

EMPIRE BUILDER DIES

In the death of Colonel Samuel Hugh Hawkins on May 26, 1905, Americus lost one of the most influential men in its history. Through his enterprise Americus had thrown off her village swaddling clothes and blossomed forth a

full-panoplied city. He was the father of Nancy Louise (Mrs. T. B. Hooks), Cordelia (Mrs. T. F. Gatewood), Eva (Mrs. Logan Irvin), Agnes (Mrs. W. W. Dykes), William, Luther, Herbert, and Samuel H. Hawkins, Jr.⁹³

Judge Allen Fort, Georgia's railroad commissioner and a distinguished former jurist, breathed his last on April 20, 1907. He was the father of Mary (Mrs. Stewart Colley), Susan, Georgia, James, Hollis and the Reverend Allen Fort, Jr.⁹⁴

One of Americus' most useful citizens, Uriah Bullock Harrold, died on September 10, 1907. A successful business man, he also was an important factor in other phases of community life. He had served as chairman of the Board of Water Commissioners and had been senior warden of Calvary Episcop al Church for more than twenty-five years. He was the father of Mary, Anna, Elizabeth, Ella (Mrs. S. S. Shipps), Theodore, Thomas, Frank, William, Charles and Edward Harrold.⁹⁵

Colonel Walter Thomas Davenport, well-known druggist and a pioneer citizen of Americus, died on November 6, 1910. Erect and handsome, invariably clad in a Prince Albert coat and carrying a gold-handled cane, he had long been one of the city's most distinguished figures. His children were Walter, George, Florence (Mrs. B. P. Hollis), Virginia (Mrs. A. W. Smith), Fannie (Mrs. Dupont Guerry), Addie (Mrs. B. J. Baldwin), Anna (Mrs. S. W. Dixon), Leila (Mrs. Lawson Stapleton) and the Reverend Thomas E. Davenport.⁹⁶

Seventy-eight year old John Barsh Felder, popular former mayor of Americus, died on September 1, 1912. A successful merchant and realtor, he had once served as mayor for almost twenty years without opposition. He was a son of Captain C. W. Felder and was a native of Houston County, Georgia. Mr. Felder's wife was the former Miss Lucy Taylor, daughter of Ezekial Taylor, of Americus. They were the parents of Thomas Jackson, Inez (Mrs. Logan Williamson), Taylor, Calvin William, Katherine (Mrs. Sidney Hagerton) and John B. Felder, Jr.⁹⁷

A prominent Americus family was decimated by the call of death in a period of nine years early in the century. Thornton Wheatley died in 1908 and his brothers John Wright and Charles McKay Wheatley died in 1910 and 1915, respectively. Mrs. John W. Wheatley, the former Miss Mary Elizabeth Dudley, died in 1917. Thornton Wheatley was the father of Alice and John Charles Wheatley; John W. Wheatley was the father of Caroline, Crawford, George D., and John W. Wheatley, Jr., and Charles McKay Wheatley was the father of Martha, Flora (Mrs. George W. Bacot) and Elizabeth Wheatley. George D. Wheatley, whose wife was Merrel Callaway's daughter Margaret, was the father of Merrel, John, May, Kate (Mrs. J. D. Hooks), Isabelle, Cliff and George D. Wheatley, Jr.⁹⁸

Chapter X

WAR AND A FABULOUS DECADE

(1917 - 1929)

As the year 1917 began, the United States was apprehensively aware of the mounting aggression of Germany under the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm. The situation became increasingly tense and finally it appeared to be inevitable that the nation would become involved in a European war. Those fears were realized on April 6 when President Woodrow Wilson signed a declaration of war against Germany. Thus did the United States enter into what was idealistically called "the war to end wars."

The impact of war was immediately felt in Americus. Young men enthusiastically volunteered for service in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. They were cheered wildly as they left by train and by bus for training camps throughout the country. Despite the many volunteers, however, it soon became necessary for the Government to draft men for military duty. Men thirty-five years of age and less were required to register with local selective service boards, after which they reported for duty when their number was pulled from a goldfish bowl in which all registrants' numbers were mixed.

The War Department established a military aviation training camp on a four hundred-acre tract four miles northeast of Americus. It was named Souther Field in honor of Major Henry Souther, a pioneer in the development of airplane engines. The site of the camp was the former Rylander peach orchards, which were said to have been the most extensive in the world.¹

Early in 1918 construction was completed on barracks, officers' homes, a huge supply depot and twelve hangars. Some two million dollars was spent on the project - quite an impressive sum in those days. The supply depot employed hundreds of men to maintain a continuous flow of supplies to aviation camps throughout the southeastern states. The Central of Georgia ran spur tracks to the camp and erected a railroad station for use by a steady stream of visiting dignitaries.²

Many young men from all parts of the United States received their aviation training at Souther Field. Khaki-clad figures soon were more in evidence on Americus' streets than was the mufti of local residents.³ The people of the town opened their homes and their hearts to the young men, and many enduring friendships were established. Inevitably, there was romance; many of the loveliest Americus belles married Army flyers and moved to distant parts of the country.

The women of Americus took an active part in supporting the war effort.

Mrs. Frank Harrold⁴ was county chairman of the woman's committee for three Liberty Loan drives.— Mrs. S. H. McKee was vice-chairman of the Sumter County chapter of the American Red Cross⁵ (Colonel William Lawson Peel of Atlanta, a former Americus resident, was Red Cross director for the entire South). There were others who made contributions of equal importance. In addition, many Americus women knitted for the soldiers, sailors and marines; staffed a volunteer lunch room; rolled bandages for use on the battlefields, and regularly visited Souther Field to spread cheer among ill or homesick cadets.

In September, 1918, a wave of Spanish influenza swept through Sumter County with such devastating rapidity that it soon reached epidemic proportions. It continued in force through January of the next year, taking many lives and partially disrupting the normal conduct of business in the city and at the training camp. Citizens of Americus who, of necessity, must leave their homes, were careful to wear gauze masks while on the streets. One thousand two hundred persons were ill at one time, including four of the city's five active physicians. Dr. W. S. Prather and a young doctor at Souther Field battled the disease unassisted.—

Two hundred and eighty-five of the 1,500 men at the training camp were ill. The Government hospital had only 275 beds, so it was necessary to put some of the sick in barracks and in the camp YMCA. Eighty cases of pneumonia developed in a single night; ten of the men died before morning. Finally, by replacing the winter dampness with adequate heat, Dr. Prather succeeded in completely halting the staggering deaths.—

On November 11, 1918, the tolling of the Presbyterian church bell signalled the end of the war.⁸ An armistice had been signed and the aggressions of the German war lords were ended. Jubilation filled Americus as its people crowded the streets of the business district in relief and excitement.

In 1916, the Reverend George F. Brown succeeded the Reverend Robert L. Bivins as pastor of the Furlow Lawn Baptist Church. In 1917 the church building was enlarged, the exterior was brick-veneered, and a Sunday school annex was added at the rear of the auditorium. At the same time, the name was changed to Central Baptist Church. Three pastors followed Mr. Brown in quick succession: the Reverend Henry T. Brookshire, Dr. Milo H. Massey, and the Reverend Hoke Shirley. The Reverend John R. Joyner, a recent graduate of Mercer University, was named pastor in 1929⁹ and continued in that position for some fifteen years.

In 1919 the parishioners of Calvary Episcopal Church began worshiping in a new church edifice. Constructed on the site of the original frame building,

which was removed to the rear of the property for use as a Sunday school building, it was designed by the noted New York architectural firm of Cram and Ferguson. The exterior was of glazed red brick, and most of the interior appointments were made of American walnut.¹⁰ The simple lines of the church provided a charming contrast to some of the more ornate Victorian churches in town.

A new denomination was added to the list of Protestant churches in Americus when, on April 7, 1921, the First Christian Church was formally organized. Actually, the church had come into being in 1907 through the efforts of W. A. Joyner, C. J. Clark, Frank Lanier, W. H. Ison, and Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Hightower. In the intervening years the group lapsed into inactivity and would surely have disappeared entirely save for the efforts of Mr. Joyner, a local dry goods merchant and a persistent worker in behalf of his church. Subsequently, the building formerly used by a short-lived Universalist church was acquired and remodeled. Located on Taylor Street next to the property of the First Baptist Church, the white brick-veneer structure continues to serve the needs of the First Christian Church. Its pastor for most of its first thirty years was the tireless Mr. Joyner.¹¹

On the night of August 5, 1922, the First Methodist church was destroyed by fire. Extensive repairs had recently been made on the building and a new \$10,000 pipe organ was being installed at the time of the disaster. The fire was believed to have resulted from spontaneous combustion originating in paint-saturated waste materials left by workmen.¹²

Construction of a new sanctuary was begun in the following year under the direction of a building committee composed of L. G. Council, chairman; S. R. Heys, treasurer; Frank Lanier, C. M. Council, A. D. Gatewood, John W. Shiver, John Sheffield and R. L. McMath. Services were held in the basement of the new structure in 1924 and in September, 1925, services were held in the newly completed auditorium. Homecoming Week was held at the latter time, with former pastors filling the pulpit each evening.¹³

The magnificent new First Methodist Church was patterned after an Athenian temple. Constructed of granite and yellow brick, its dominant features were a large copper dome and six beautiful Corinthian columns across the front. Many of its interior appointments were memorial gifts from members of the congregation. The superb pipe organ was a gift from Charles M. Council in memory of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Council.

AMERICUS THROUGH THE YEARS

Under the able leadership of the Reverend John M. Outler, some \$194,000 was raised toward the total building cost



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

of \$250, 000. ¹⁴
The Mortgage was paid off about ten years after the completion of the new building.

SERVICE CLUBS

A new type of organization was added to the local scene on September 17, 1918, when the Americus Rotary Club was organized. Its charter members were: Davis R. Andrews, Charles H. Burke, W. W. Dykes, George Ellis, the Reverend Mr. English, "Turk" Harris, Shelton Howell, J. E. Hightower, Joe Johnson, J. E. Mathis, Frank Mangun (first president), Lucius McCleskey, Arthur Rylander, Walter Rylander, John Sheffield, Richard Taylor, Dr. M.H. Wheeler and Paul Westbrook. ¹⁵

A second service club came into being on June 7, 1920, when the Americus Kiwanis Club was chartered through the efforts of J. Lewis Ellis (who conceived the idea and who served as first president), Eugene A. Bailey, S.R. Heys, Lee Hudson, W. M. Jones, W. S. Kirkpatrick, Evan Mathis, George Marshall, Nathan Murray, J. E. Sheppard and Edgar Shipp, Jr. ¹⁶

The Rotary and Kiwanis clubs brought a new spirit of fellowship and community service into Americus. They were, to be sure, typical of such organizations all over the country - the boosters, the back-slapping do-gooders so acidly portrayed in Main Street, Sinclair Lewis' satirical novel of small town life in the 'Twenties. But, at the same time, they made substantial contributions to the life of their city and, even more important, they provided the opening wedge through which Americus' widely recognized complacency was to be routed many years later. Through their efforts the downtown streets were adequately lighted, a bond issue was floated to finance the paving of streets, and numerous deserving boys were provided with scholarship funds. ¹⁷ Americus became a better place in which to live because of these organizations and their enthusiastic, hard-working members.

The women of the town, noting the efforts of their menfolk in the realm of civic betterment, decided to bestir themselves and improve the appearance of their community. Accordingly, the Sumter Garden Club was organized in September, 1928. Mrs. Crawford Wheatley, whose own gardens were among the loveliest in Americus, was the guiding spirit in the formation of the new club. She was ably assisted by Mrs. H. O. Jones, Mrs. Ray Ansley, Mrs. E. L. Carswell, Mrs. W. E. Mitchell, and a score of other garden enthusiasts¹⁸.

Among the first projects undertaken by the Sumter Garden Club were the erection of new gates at the Church Street entrance to Oak Grove Cemetery, the improvement of Rees Park and of two small parks in the middle of West Church Street, and the creation of Memorial Mile on the Ellaville road. The latter project honored Sumter County men who had served in World War I. When a veteran died, his name was placed on a small bronze plaque attached to one of many marble markers lining both sides of the highway. The area was attractively landscaped with poppies, crepe myrtles and evergreens.¹⁹

The advantages afforded by Sumter County's rich farm lands and salubrious climate were pointed out in an attractive pamphlet produced by the Americus and Sumter County Chamber of Commerce in 1928. Entitled Sumter County, Georgia, Where Farming Costs Less and Earns More, it mentioned the high productivity of cotton, peaches, pecans and produce crops. Several pages of pictures interestingly presented typical county scenes, as well as public buildings and several beautiful residences in Americus.

Elected officials of Sumter County in 1929 were: R. T. Hawkins, ordinary; H. E. Allen, clerk of court; I. B. Small, tax commissioner; Mrs. Erin W. Stewart, treasurer; Ed Jenkins, coroner; T. O. Marshall, solicitor of city court; H. A. Cliett, county agent; Dr. W. H. Houston, health officer; and E. L. Bridges, school superintendent.²⁰

The Sumter County Board of Education was composed of J. E. D. Shipp, Americus, chairman; G. C. Thomas, Cobb; W. C. Jordan, Americus; R. M. Andrews, Plains; C. A. Slaphey, Andersonville.²¹

County commissioners were: C. C. Hawkins, Americus, chairman; W. T. Anderson, Leslie; George W. Wiggins, Jr., Smithville; John W. Shiver, Americus; and W. A. Carter, Plains.²²

Sumter's representatives to the General Assembly were R. L. Maynard of Americus and Algernon F. Hodges of Andersonville. The senator from the Thirteenth District was W. T. Lane of Americus.²³

The fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Americus public school system

was observed in ceremonies at the high school on February 23, 1923. A large concourse of former pupils, past and present teachers, city officials and sons and daughters of members of the first board of education were present. Also in attendance were members of the current board of education: W. W. Dykes, president; George R. Ellis, vice president; John Sheffield, W. M. Humber, Davis R. Andrews, Arthur Rylander, John B. Ansley, T. F. Gatewood, T. E. Bolton, S. R. Heys, A. J. Harris, E. B. Everett and Mayor J. E. Poole (ex-officio).²⁴

In 1923 Mrs. Frank Harrold was elected president general of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.²⁵ Previously she had served as president of the Americus chapter and of the Georgia Division.²⁶ In the same year in which she was elevated to the national office, her brother, Clifford Walker of Monroe, was inaugurated as the sixty-fourth governor of Georgia.²⁷ Mrs. Harrold's son, Frank Walker Harrold, was at that time a Rhodes Scholar, having been appointed from the University of Georgia. He had been valedictorian of the Americus High School graduating class in 1916.²⁸

Two grandsons of Dr. R. C. Black, a well known Americus physician of the last century, achieved national prominence in the 'Twenties. They were the sons of Eugene P. Black, who had moved from Americus to Atlanta in 1870.²⁹ One son, William H. Black, was a distinguished member of the New York Supreme Court.³⁰ The other, Eugene R. Black, was governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. The latter's wife was a daughter of Henry W. Grady.³¹ One of their sons, Eugene R. Black, Jr., achieved international prominence twenty-five years later when he became president of the World Bank.³²

In 1928 Sumter County bought Souther Field from the Government and began to use it for peacetime purposes.³³ A few years earlier, a shy young man from Minnesota was among the dozens of aviators from all over the country who bought surplus planes there when the Government advertised them for sale. He paid \$500 for his plane. His first solo flight was made over the field and subsequently he made his first cross-country trip from Souther Field to Minnesota. The young flyer was Charles A. Lindbergh, who, in 1927, became the first man to fly solo non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean.³⁴

Americus acquired two important new commercial buildings in the financially solvent 1920s. They were the Empire Bank building, a handsome two-story granite structure on the southeast corner of Lamar Street and Forrest Avenue, and the Rylander Theatre building, a two-story red brick structure on the south side of Lamar Street at the end of Cotton Avenue.

The Rylander building was constructed to house an auditorium for the showing of motion pictures, a new medium of entertainment which was considered the marvel of the age. An organ was installed to provide accompaniment to silent films featuring such now-legendary actors and actresses as Pearl White, John Gilbert, Mary Pickford and others. The first motion pictures in Americus were shown in the old Glover Opera House on Forsyth Street, but that venerable institution left the local entertainment scene early in the 'Thirties.

More new houses were constructed in the decade spanning the 'Twenties than at any time since the Victorian era. Most of them were frame structures with no claim to architectural distinction. There were, however, two new residences which deserve special mention. Both were of brick, two stories in height, and both were erected on Taylor Street.

One of the palatial structures was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Davis R. Andrews. It was built next to their earlier frame residence, which adjoined the property of the First Chris-



ANDREWS HOUSE

tian church. After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Andrews it was occupied for a time by their daughter and son-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Lavender. Subsequently, it was acquired by J. T. Warren, local soft drink bottler.

The other house was built by Carr S. Glover for his beautiful second wife. It was constructed on the site of Mr. Glover's earlier frame residence, which adjoined on the west the house formerly owned by Speaker Charles F. Crisp. This handsome home was built of dark purplish-red brick and it had a one-suite corner tower rising above the second floor. Following Mr. Glover's death and his widow's remarriage, the house was acquired by Frank Cannon, owner of a local van line.

These two houses, together with the stately home of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Council, and other handsome Americus residences, were the scenes of many elegant social affairs in the free and easy days before the Great Depression.

In 1925 Americus voters approved the floating of \$65,000 in street improvement bonds for the purpose of replacing wooden paving blocks with concrete.³⁵ The age of the automobile was fast overtaking the town, and the inadequacy of its streets was becoming increasingly apparent.

AMERICUS GOLF CLUB

In the same year, new officers were chosen for the Americus Golf Club, which had been organized a few years earlier. Succeeding Walter Rylander as president was Frank Harrold, while Howell Elam's post as secretary and treasurer was assumed by Lucius McClesky. Carr S. Glover was named vice president, and the following directors were elected: H. O. Jones, Middleton McDonald, J. Lewis Ellis, Frank Lanier, J. T. Warren and Messrs. Rylander, McClerky, Harrold and Glover.³⁶ The club's golf course was located on South Lee Street Road, just north of Dr. P. F. Bahnsen's farm.

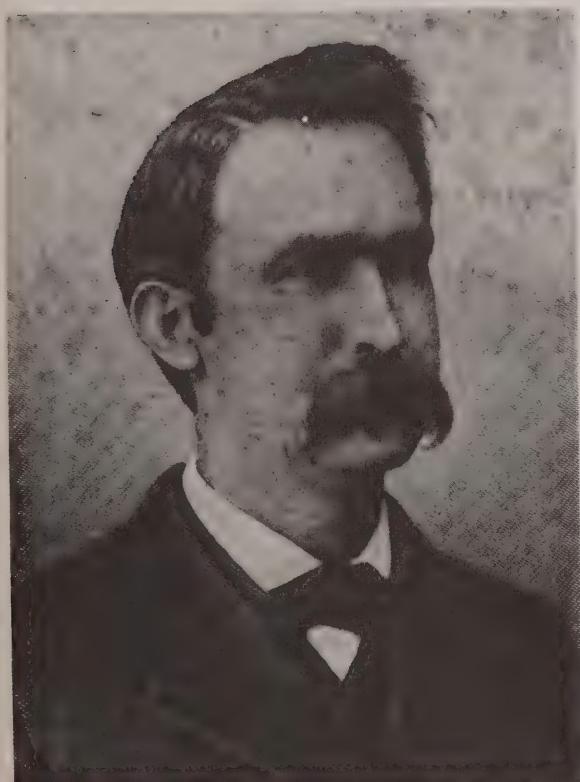
The annual meeting of the Southwest Field Trials Association was held at Americus on January 9, 1925. New officers chosen at that time were: V. B. Oliver, president; Dr. J. W. Bayne, vice president, and Hamilton Yancey, secretary and treasurer. Directors named were: Trammell Scott, Atlanta; S. A. Slade,³⁷ Vienna; J. W. Hightower, D. T. Jennings and Lucas Thiers, Americus.

Captain John A. Cobb, ordinary of Sumter County, reported with considerable regret that only 324 marriages occurred in the county in 1924, as compared with 491 in the previous year. This decrease he attributed to "the position of bashful swains who relied too confidently upon the exercise of the quadrennial privilege by marriageable maidens during leap year."³⁸

FIRST LEGION POST

On August 20, 1920, a group of veterans of World War I banded together and organized the John D. Mathis Post of the American Legion. It was named in honor of Lieutenant John Dawkins Mathis, a son of Dr. E. T. Mathis, who had lost his life in World War I. This was the first Legion post to be organized in Georgia. When it was chartered on March 15, 1922, however, it was given the designation Number 2 because an Atlanta post had been chartered a short time earlier. Americus furnished the first department commander and adjutant of the state Legion organization in the persons of Major James A. Fort and J.E.B. McLendon, respectively.³⁹

The first commander of John D. Mathis Post Number 2 was Dan Chappell and the first adjutant was B. C. Hogue. Subsequent commanders in the early years of the post were: the Reverend F. P. Anderson, J.E.B. McLendon, R. L. Crawford, Ralph C. Lane, Cecil Waters, Walter Bell, Dudley Mize, Evan Mathis, Henry Walker, Jr., Roy A. Flynt, Sherley Hudson, Robert K. Arthur and Herbert Moon.⁴⁰



DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS: (*top, left*) John Barsh Felder, (*right*) Charles Frederick Crisp, (*lower, left*) Allen Fort, and (*right*) Eugene Alston Hawkins.

Sumter County farmers were seriously affected by the depredations of the boll weevil early in the 'Twenties. Except for a peak production of 2,768,000 bales of cotton in 1911, Georgia's annual production since 1880 had averaged 1,000,000 bales. In the three years following the appearance of the boll weevil in 1919, however, production was set back forty years. The 1923 crop was a mere 588,000 bales.⁴¹ This sharp decrease brought despair and alarm into such trade areas as Americus, where the farmers' solvency was the barometer of economic well being. As a result of the decline of cotton, a great many farmers turned to pecans, peaches and hogs as more stable commodities.

L. E. Wilson, manager of the newly-established Americus Creamery, proposed an even more drastic departure from long-established practices. "Sumter County farmers who will put in dairy herds," he said, "may avail themselves of a weekly cash payroll."⁴² This was novel, almost frivolous advice at the time, but it pointed the way to a diversification that was to pay big dividends twenty-five years later.

THE CRASH

In mid-1926 occurred the failure of one hundred banks in Georgia and Florida, all of which were members of a chain of banks operated by the Bankers Trust Company of Atlanta. The eighty-six which collapsed in Georgia had resources of \$10,439,000. Their failure was directly caused by the deflation of a fabulous boom in Florida real estate.⁴³

Thousands of persons from all over the United States had flocked to the Sunshine State in the confident expectation of making a million dollars overnight. Americus contributed a goodly number of entrepreneurs to this starry-eyed group of bedazzled citizens. Some few local residents made tremendous fortunes, most of which were lost as quickly and mysteriously as they had been acquired. In the end, the whole Florida boom left a bitter taste in the mouth of nearly everyone who had plunged into it so excitedly. It caused hundreds of suicides, thousands of bankruptcies, and millions of acute financial problems. As a result of the universal hunger to obtain something for nothing, the country was led into economic disaster and the ghastly depression years of the 'Thirties.

As the plight of Sumter County farmers worsened, so, too, did the condition of banks which served them and whose assets were largely tied up in farm mortgages. In 1927 the Planters Bank reported reserves and liabilities of \$1,064,230, and the Bank of Commerce reported \$1,870,792 in the same category.⁴⁴ Less than a year later the Planters Bank closed its doors,⁴⁵ causing the greatest financial devastation to the community since the collapse of the SAM empire in the 'Nineties.

Lee Council, president of the Planters Bank, was reported to have disposed of two million dollars worth of his personal assets at half of their face value in a desperate effort to pay off some of the bank's liabilities.⁴⁶ Charles M. Council, vice president, was deprived of his magnificent home, which was padlocked after the family had removed their most personal possessions. The third brother, Barlow Council, also lost his home, an attractive two-story brick structure opposite the First Methodist Church. The three brothers apparently did everything in their power to save the bank and, that failing, to protect its depositors. That they did not succeed in their efforts was starkly revealed by the crushing losses sustained by the people of Americus and Sumter County.

As the community wallowed in economic turmoil, there was a sharp increase in the number of business failures. One of the first enterprises to succumb was the Americus Times-Recorder, which, deprived of the advertising patronage of businessmen who were dependent upon the farmers, foundered a few years after Lovelace Eve had acquired it. The newspaper was bought at a sheriff's sale in 1929 by William Prescott Allen of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.⁴⁷ Mr. Allen immediately moved his family to Americus and settled them in the two-story residence which Mrs. James Taylor had erected some years earlier on the south end of Captain John A. Cobb's lawn.

One of Americus' oldest and finest mercantile establishments fell a victim to the Crash of '29. Known successively as J. A. Kendrick & Sons, Kendrick & Wheatley, T. Wheatley, Wheatley & Ansley and, finally, Charles L. Ansley, this firm was a forerunner of the department stores of a later era. At the time of its liquidation, it occupied a new brick building on the southwest corner of Lamar and Jackson streets.

On December 9, 1925, death claimed Captain John A. Cobb, a popular and beloved resident of Americus for almost sixty years. He was survived by two daughters of his first wife, Sarah and Lucy Middleton (Mrs. N. B. Stewart; formerly Mrs. James Taylor), and three children of his second wife (who also survived), Elizabeth, Martha and George Cobb. By his long and distinguished career as Episcopal layman, public official and successful planter, Captain Cobb increased the honor which surrounds his family name in Georgia and the South.⁴⁸

John West Sheffield, well known banker and hardware dealer, died on November 17, 1920. He was the father of Lucy (Mrs. Charles R. Crisp), Nettie (Mrs. Henry L. Collier), Frank, John, and Edwin Davis Sheffield.⁴⁹ The last named son preceded his father in death by one year, leaving two children, Sarah (Mrs. Carl Ramspeck) and Wallace B. Sheffield.

Malcolm Blue Council, long-time farmer and cotton warehouse figure, died on May 12, 1920. He was the father of Lena (Mrs. John T. Argo), Eugenia (Mrs. Elton Parker), Nell (formerly Mrs. Ernest Statham), Elizabeth (Mrs. S. H. McKee), Emma, Harris, and John M. Council.⁵⁰

Among other noted citizens who answered the final call in these years were Dr. Robert Eugene Cato, fifty-seven year old physician, and Eugene Alston Hawkins, noted attorney and former mayor, both of whom died in 1917; William Harris Crawford Wheatley, financier and leader in all phases of community life, who died in 1921; William Augustus Dodson, attorney and political leader, who died in 1923; Mrs. J. P. Chapman, nee Anna, daughter of pioneer citizen Isaac McCrary, who died in 1926 and was buried with her treasured gold diploma from Furlow Masonic Female College; Lawson Steapleton, son-in-law of W. T. Davenport and long active in local business and social circles, and Arthur Rylander, sixty-eight year old peach grower and merchant, both of whom died in 1929.⁵¹

Chapter XI

HARD TIMES AND ANOTHER WAR

(1930 - 1945)

As the year 1930 passed in review, it presented a pathetic picture of rapidly increasing poverty and desperation. Thousands of acres of fertile farm lands lay idle, mute witness to the greedy boll weevil and the collapse of the cotton market. Many small independent farmers and a large number of tenant farmers were close to utter destitution as the year ended. Some of them trudged into Americus, Columbus, Macon - any place that offered the possibility of jobs, however menial, that would enable families to be fed and clothed. The number of foreclosures on farms mounted with sickening rapidity. Eventually these parcels of land had almost no takers, for few men were willing to risk capital at a time when the entire country appeared to be heading for bankruptcy. There were, of course, some moneyed men with the vision to see eventual profits to be had from buying farm lands at such low prices. There also were hard and sometimes unscrupulous men who lusted after the property of poor devils whose mortgages they held.

The rural people were not, by any means, the only ones affected by the boll weevil or by the collapse of the stock and cotton markets. Their city brethren suffered, too, though perhaps not so keenly at first. Merchants were caught with large boom-time stocks which could not be moved fast enough to enable them to pay operating expenses out of current income. A number of small shoe-string operators were forced out of business in the early years of the Depression because they were unable to obtain extensions of credit.

Americus, as did every other town and city in the United States, experienced some dark and gloomy times in the years between 1929 and 1935. There were sensational instances of well-to-do families being reduced to penury, but most of that class were able to get by with a minor retrenchment in their standard of living. Even so, there were dozens of examples of sons and daughters who moved their families into the ancestral home in order to keep their heads above the tides of economic chaos. The number of servants was reduced in most homes; in some the family dispensed with them entirely.

The lower-middle income group probably suffered most, because they no longer were able to keep up their front of impoverished respectability. Thus, not only were they bereft of an adequate income; they also were deprived of their prized status in the community.

The downright poor, of course, were, as always, in tragic circumstances. But they were able to accept this status by virtue of long conditioning. It

was easy for churches and generous individuals to press offerings of food and clothing upon them, whereas the newly-poor deeply resented such offers of assistance - although some might be impelled by dire need to accept.

Americus did what it could to alleviate suffering by providing jobs when possible and material assistance when that was not possible. A soup kitchen was opened in the business district where soup and bread were available free of charge. But that was not enough; at least, it was not adequate for a period of several years.

Thus was the stage set for the arrival upon the scene of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was inaugurated as President of the United States on March 4, 1933. A curious combination of circumstances made this scion of wealth and proponent of liberal social measures acceptable to people whose political and social viewpoints were at complete variance with the ones he espoused. But, at the time, any help was better than no help at all, so Roosevelt was expectantly regarded as the deliverer of an oppressed people.

The new President quickly asserted himself, thereby earning the plaudits of the nation. He ordered a three-day bank holiday in an effort to stop the ever-mounting runs being made by nervous depositors. Commenting upon this action, the Americus Times-Recorder observed soothingly:

"Our bank here is one of the best in the state Other banks in this vicinity are in good shape, also, and their depositors have nothing to fear....

"It is up to the public, as loyal Americans, to cooperate in the exchange of certificates of deposit, merchandise, produce, services, etc., to prevent stagnation of business. Americus is fortunate in having a few thousand dollars of city bills in circulation. The city bills are just as good as Uncle Sam's money, except that they must be kept in circulation at home. So much the better in an emergency as the present ... considered inevitable by leading bankers and business minds of the country for months...."¹

President Roosevelt, widely quoted as telling the alarmed nation that the only thing it had to fear was fear itself, took other and equally novel steps. He instituted the Civilian Conservation Corps, which employed thousands of young men to protect and improve the nation's forests. The National Recovery Act was instituted as an aid to the harassed business man, and its blue eagle insignia became the symbol of the times. The Workers Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration were devised to provide jobs, the former in

office work and the latter in the construction and repair of public buildings and roads.

Americus and Sumter County received their share of the benefits realized through these measures. A CCC camp was located a few miles north of Americus on the Ellaville road, WPA funds provided two part-time assistants at the Carnegie Library, roads were graded and improved by PWA labor, and the policies of the short-lived NRA had an immediate effect upon the community's business activity.

Shortly after President Roosevelt's inauguration, Frank Chappell was appointed postmaster at Americus. He succeeded D. F. Davenport, who had served in that capacity longer than any man to date. That record, however, was to be surpassed by Mr. Chappell in the years ahead.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

On December 9, 1931, Americus and Sumter County combined forces in a joint celebration of their one hundredth birthday anniversaries. The observance was the result of a suggestion made by the Reverend James B. Lawrence in the course of a sermon delivered at Calvary Episcopal Church in 1928. He stated that the town and the county should plan appropriate ceremonies to commemorate the lives of the men and women who had guided them through a century of progress.²

Gay bunting and flags decorated the courthouse, city hall, downtown streets and most business houses on the auspicious day. Flags were in evidence throughout the residential sections of the town, and houses and front lawns were meticulously groomed in preparation for the thousands of visitors who arrived to enjoy the festivities.³

Show windows of stores throughout the business district displayed a fascinating assortment of historic items. There were dainty baby clothes, beautiful gowns, antique furniture, spinning wheels, pictures of old scenes and of long-dead citizens, and hundreds of miscellaneous items to delight young and old alike. One of the handsomest and most noteworthy exhibits was the suit which William Harris Crawford had worn at the Court of Napoleon in 1813. Made in Belgium, it was designed of blue silk, embroidered with gold and silver, and studded with rhinestones. This valuable relic was loaned by the Dudley family, descendants of the illustrious statesman.⁴

Wednesday, December 9, was a drab and rainy day, but the inclement

weather did not dampen the holiday spirit that enveloped the town.⁵

The day's festivities began at ten o'clock with a concert by the American Legion band in front of the Rylander Theatre. When the formal ceremonies got under way inside the theatre thirty minutes later, hundreds of persons overflowed the auditorium.⁶

The program opened with an organ prelude played by Harry Williams, after which the Reverend James B. Lawrence invoked divine blessings upon the county and its people. Mayor James A. Fort welcomed visitors and former residents, and noted that Mrs. G. W. Glover had traveled two thousand miles from Los Angeles to share in her old home town's celebration. He introduced Leonard C. Parker, a ninety-six year-old retired farmer, as the oldest living native resident of Sumter County. Mrs. Carr Glover, Jr., the former Miss Martha Duncan and herself a descendant of one of the founders of Sumter, then sang "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms."⁷

Professor J. E. Mathis introduced the speaker for the occasion, Judge Frank A. Hooper of Atlanta, who had served for twenty years as solicitor general of the Southwestern Circuit. Judge Hooper touched upon the careers of some of Americus' distinguished citizens of by-gone days, the obstacles which the county's pioneers had overcome, and the continuing efforts to make a better and more prosperous town and county to pass on to future generations. He concluded his remarks by saying:

"Just as your forefathers rose above the devastating effects of the war through which they suffered, so will you by displaying the same spirit and fight, rise above the now receding business depression."⁸

At 11:45 o'clock a giant barbecue was held in a vacant lot at the rear of the Planters Bank Building. Following that, thousands of persons clogged the downtown area and South Lee Street to witness a spectacular parade which got under way at 1:15 P.M. Beginning at the intersection of Church and Jackson streets, it proceeded through the entire business district and then moved out Lee Street to Hill Street, where it was disbanded.⁹

Reported the Americus Times-Recorder:

"Rivalling the products of great circus masters, the Centennial parade . . . in which were incorporated half a hundred units, thrilled thousands of spectators with its beauty and unique arrangement.

"The theme of historical story-telling was carried out. Judges

selected the three most beautiful floats for award of cash prizes. To the D.A.R. float, on which was mounted an illusive likeness of the pioneer log cabin, went first prize of \$25. A gorgeous floral float entered by Speer's Flower Garden was the selection for second prize of \$15, while Americus city schools was third, \$15.

"The most unique float entered was the pioneer cart drawn by a yoke of oxen. Driven by a southern darkey, the cart bore an aged grandmother and child, represented by Miss Aeolia Caldwell and little Edna Boatright. Miss Caldwell sat in a handmade chair turned out by the hands of her grandfather, Bennett Whitehead, of Shiloh Springs, Sumter County, 110 years ago. Little Miss Boatright, who sat on her grandmother's knee and was fed gingercakes and peppermint candy, wore a bonnet, handmade by her great-great-grandmother, over 100 years ago, and now owned by Mrs. R. A. Slappey...."¹⁰

At two o'clock a whistle blown at the municipal playground signaled the beginning of the first college football game ever played in Americus.

"On a field more suitable for wading and making mud pies than for playing football," the Times-Recorder stated, "Ike Cowart's Norman Park Junior College eleven today defeated Bowdon State College 12-6, before 1,000 Centennial celebration fans. Despite the soggy field, which slowed up play considerably, it was a spirited battle, the winner of which was in doubt until the last part of the closing period.

"With but four minutes left to play, Treadway, smart Norman quarterback, closed a touchdown drive on fourth down when he slipped off right tackle on a spinner for one yard and the deciding touchdown. The campaign for Norman's last score began on Bowdon's 40-yard line, from which point Treadway and Jeff Bolden advanced the ball steadily down the field.

"For a long time it looked as if the contest would be a 6-6 tie . . .

"Bowdon, using the Notre Dame style of play, couldn't click in the mud. Neither could Norman, however, except in spots. Most of the contest was a kicking duel between Willie Bell Robison, former Oglethorpe reserve playing for Norman, and Kintz of Bowdon. Treadway and Kintz were the players of the day. Both are well-trained ball carriers, gifted with loose hips and a natural ability for playing the game. Kintz, it is understood, was a freshman at Notre Dame two years ago, but couldn't make the grade..."¹¹

The Centennial festivities continued with a magnificent pageant with a cast of four hundred persons, which was presented at the Rylander Theatre at seven o'clock that evening. Professor Charles M. Hale recited the details of the various scenes as they unfolded.

"As the curtain rose on the first episode, depicting the days of the redman and the coming of the first white men, the audience beheld a twilight scene of red dusk, with an Indian tepee at left nestled 'mid a wilderness of pines. Near-by was an Indian tom-tom and to the right, a campfire gleamed. An Indian scout in the rear carefully guarded his Chief's abode from invasion of the white man or any rival Indian tribe. In this scene, they beheld the Indian Chief himself and his council of warriors. Consternation and excitement reigned in the camp when the trusty scout reported three strange white men approaching. After much bartering and exchange of signs, peace was made and the symbolic pipe was brought forth and passed around to unite the Red Man and the white settler in lasting friendship. As a lovely contribution to this period, Mrs. Carr Glover, Jr., rendered a beautiful vocal solo, "Indian Love Call." Mrs. Glover was gowned as an Indian girl and her pleasing voice and personality brought forth much enthusiasm from her audience. This was followed by a most artistic finale when a group of Indian dancers from Miss Emma Chapman's school of dance, demonstrated the bow and arrow dance.

"The second episode portrayed the white 'Pioneers of Yesterday.' . . . The audience beheld a pioneer mother and father who had just selected a stopping place for the night, on the edge of a Georgia pine forest. The children hopped from the wagon with the assistance of the father, who afterwards lifted from the covered wagon an antique cradle, in which a Negro mammy, a genuine old colored mammy . . . placed the wee babe and proceeded to care for it close by the campfire's warmth. The attention of the audience then centered on the pioneer home scene, with the mother spinning the cotton while the grandmother deftly carded. The children played about on the floor, the father cleaned his trusty rifle in preparation for the next day's seek for game, and the grandfather entertained the industrious group with music from . . . his fiddle.

"The third scene of this episode pictured five descendants of the same pioneer man, who actually named the city of Americus, and showed them as they agreed that the settlement must have a name, decided to write names on slips of paper and draw them from a hat to settle the question. A small child, descendant of the child pioneer who in those early days executed the selfsame task, reached into the hat and drew forth the illustrious name, 'Americus.'

"The third episode opened with a depiction of ante-bellum days in the Negro quarters on a Sumter County plantation. The slaves were seated about a huge

basket and were busily engaged in picking their shoes full of cotton (seed), a task required of them nightly by their master. As this was accomplished, they began to make merry with song and dance, and the audience called for encores of the harmony produced by this group in old-time Negro rythm and spirituals. The scene then reverted to the 'big house' where Christmas festivities were in full swing, and the guests in the home were unable to restrain the call for dance and rythm which the strains of the Virginia Reel invited. The dancers had received most capable coaching from Miss Chapman, and the intricate steps which they executed were par-excellent in grace and beauty, and were further enhanced by the gorgeous costumes of those pre-war days . . . which had been carefully preserved 'mid lavendar and old lace.'

"A fitting climax to this episode was furnished through the kindness of Mrs. Perry Clegg of Cordele, a descendant of one of Americus' oldest pioneers, who presented in a large frame, 'Pictures of the Sixties' with song and pantomine. The Americus Normal College Girls' Chorus, under the direction of Miss Hallie Walker, accompanied with song, as living models posed in costume for the various scenes.

"The fourth episode afforded a complete history of the school systems of both the county and the city. As the high school girls' chorus sang softly, graduates of the schools from the earliest days were introduced. The additions of art, science and music to the curricula were shown, accompanied by music which grammar school pupils presented on xylophone, harmonica, and drums. They concluded their program with a march which their instructor, Mrs. Ella Polk Maynard, had written especially for them.

"The final episode carried the audience from the year 1895 through the period of the World War to the present day. A lovely altar, banked with ferns and tall baskets of flowers and flanked by tall candleabra with burning candles, occupied one side of the stage. Wedding guests in old-fashioned satins and brocades mingled in center stage. As the strains of a wedding march were heard, the guests parted for the entrance of a complete bridal party in gorgeous array significant of the period. The bride and her attendants wore lovely gowns with long trains, and in front of them walked two little flower girls who strewed rose petals in their path.

"No sooner had the bridal party taken their positions for the wedding ceremony than a curtain in center stage lifted and revealed a French cabaret scene with its noisy merriment and jubilee. American soldiers and French girls were enjoying a gay party with serpentine and confetti congesting the atmosphere as they sang 'Over There'.

"Miss Jane Fenn, of Cordele, ... then entertained the carabet guests with a lovely barefoot dance which was vigorously applauded. Miss Fenn is also a daughter of Sumter County pioneers.

"A modern processional then transferred the fancies of the audience to the present day, where they beheld representatives of civic improvement ... fire department... police system ... city hospital and its nurses' training school , and the city playground which sponsors the baseball, basketball, football, and swimming events of the community. This was followed by a lovely style review of modern dress which presented sport, beach, morning, afternoon and evening costumes. A beautiful bride of 1931 with her miniature train bearers proved a most fitting final picture as the pageant closed with the ensemble singing to the tune of 'Old Fashioned Garden' the following words, written and arranged by Mrs. E. A. Bailey:

" 'Americus and fair Sumter,
We will love you forever,
May you weather life's storm
When things seem to be wrong
And prosper more and more.
May you always stand together,
May old ties never sever,
May you keep that fine spirit,
Of the settlers long ago.' "¹²

The Centennial Grand Ball at Rylander Hall later in the evening concluded the gala birthday celebration. Some one hundred fifty couples, many of them still wearing their historic costumes from the pageant, danced until the wee hours of the morning.¹³

Never before or since has Americus witnessed such a spectacle as it saw in the long and memorable hours of its day-long Centennial. It was a happy occasion as old friends were reunited after long years apart, but it had a touch of nostalgia as they reminisced about comrades who had gone on that long journey from which there is no return. There was much talk of the old days when Americus was younger, and some of the patriarchs spoke of the four wells which once were situated at the four corners of the Public Square. They recalled the custom of piling fat wood on the Square on Christmas Day and singing carols, shooting fireworks and striking anvils, and dancing merrily as the wood was consumed by flames.¹⁴

J. O. Barnes, a local undertaker, was general chairman of the centennial celebration. The parade was under the supervision of Harvey Mathis, while

Mrs. E. L. Carswell was responsible for the pageant. The latter was assisted by Mrs. Herbert Moon, Mrs. Reese Horton, Mrs. Leon Slappey, Miss Marie Walker, Mrs. H. O. Jones, Mrs. E. L. Thurman, Mrs. Frank Turpin, Harry Williams, Miss Emma Chapman, Mrs. Perry Clegg, Mrs. Ella Pope Maynard, Miss Bernice McArthur, Miss Mary Cobb, Mrs. Herschel Smith, Mrs. Charles Lanier, Miss Ann Heys, and Mrs. James R. Blair. John Bahnen procured the horses, carriages and buggies which were an integral part of the parade.¹⁵

JAYCEES ORGANIZED

In the year of its centennial observance, Americus acquired a new and useful civic organization. At the suggestion of W. Roy Brown, advertising manager of the Americus Times-Recorder, fifty young men met at the Sumter County Courthouse on the night of March 4, 1931, to organize a Junior Chamber of Commerce. A week later thirty-five members of this group met in the Carnegie Library auditorium to elect officers. Those chosen were George R. Ellis, Jr., president; Dr. R. C. Pendergrass, vice president; John West Sheffield, second vice president; W. R. Brown, secretary, and Sam Merritt, treasurer. A board of directors of twenty men, later reduced to twelve, was headed by A. W. Schmidt as chairman.¹⁶

The Jaycees immediately set out to better their community. The first major project they undertook was the purchase of a three-acre tract behind the high school, which was converted into a playground for the pupils. The purchase of this property was accomplished in cooperation with the Parent-Teacher Association and the Sumter Garden Club. Another project of the young men resulted in the organization of The Americus Cardinals, local entrant in the Southwest Georgia Baseball League.¹⁷

By act of the General Assembly in 1926, the Third District Agricultural and Mechanical College was made a junior college and its name changed to Americus Normal College. From that year it concentrated upon teaching future teachers, although general college courses were available to young men and women for an annual tuition of only two hundred dollars. All high school-level courses were dropped from the curriculum in 1931, at which time they were transferred to the new Anthony High School, which had been constructed on the campus at a cost of fifteen thousand dollars. In its first four years of operation, Americus Normal College showed an increase in enrollment from 232 students in 1926 to 389 students in 1930. Professor John M. Prance was president of the institution.¹⁸

In 1933 Americus Normal College was re-designated as Georgia South-western College and made a junior branch of the University System of Georgia. Normal courses were discontinued and the curriculum was strengthened to provide a good two-year college education for young people of Sumter and surrounding counties. Dr. Peyton Jacob was the first president of the college.¹⁹

Americus acquired a weekly newspaper in 1930 when C. C. Holliday established The Tri-County News.²⁰ Harry Leadingham of Atlanta became editor in 1933. His wife, the former Miss Emily Winship of Atlanta, was a great-niece of Mrs. Jessie L. Mathis. Subsequently, Mr. Leadingham joined the staff of the Associated Press and became chief of its Milwaukee bureay.²¹ He was succeeded as editor of The Tri-County News by Lovelace Eve, a capable and highly respected member of the Fourth Estate.

The Americus Times-Recorder changed hands on January 1, 1931, when William Prescott Allen sold out to a mid-west syndicate and moved to Laredo, Texas. The paper's new editor was James R. Blair, who, in 1936, acquired complete control from his out-of-state partners.²²

Radio Station WENC was established, circa 1935, to meet the challenge and opportunities afforded by a marvelous new medium of communication. Ed Lynn Bridges was manager of the Station²³ and James A. Davenport, Jr., was a member of its staff. The enterprise was not successful, principally because Americus businessmen regarded it as a pleasant, but transient and slightly frivolous novelty. Lacking adequate advertising revenue, WENC was moved to Albany after a few years.

Both local newspapers concentrated heavily upon news of Americus and its three-county trade area. They afforded space for the occasional letters, reminiscences and poems of the few persons who were either sufficiently interested or motivated to express their opinions or to display their creative powers. Several contributions of verse attracted passing interest, among which were "The Old Kitchen Fork," by the Reverend T. E. Davenport; "Salute To Georgia," by Mrs. W. H. Bowers; "Mother," by Wimberly Drew, and "Just Be Like Jesus," by ten-year old Mildred Bailey.²⁴

A nostalgic article by Mrs. May Speer Ansley described life in Americus' first brick residence, which was demolished in 1939. Entitled, "The Passing of The Old Home," it said in part:

"For upwards of two generations it had stood a monument to the pioneer days of Americus, the only brick residence for many years in the city. Substantially built with outside walls a foot or more in thickness, it represented in

its solidity, its dignity, its rugged beauty, its enduring strength, the character of the builder who was his own architect, building perhaps wiser than he knew, for it was a home not only for the sons and daughters of the house, but for brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews of the family.

"...The marriage of the elder daughter was celebrated under its roof in true southern fashion with that lavish hospitality typical of the South, and ... the golden wedding of that same daughter was celebrated with the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of the original owner assembled underneath its ancient roof.

"Indeed hospitality ever abounded there and all sorts and conditions of men were entertained - never a convention, a conference, a gathering of any description, religious, political or social but what its doors were wide open. With what dignity did the head of the house preside at one end of the well appointed table! With what grace his gentle wife at the other!

"...On New Year's night the old home was ablaze with many lights and the scene was one of brilliance and gaiety, with guests young and old coming to wish 'Happy New Year' to the inmates. ..." ²⁵

The house described by Mrs. Ansley was the residence of her father, Major M. Speer, late president of the Bank of Southwest Georgia. It stood on the northwest corner of Church and Jackson streets. The bricks from this old structure were used in a one-story office building which was erected on the Jackson Street side of the property.

Social life in the 'Thirties continued to be centered in the homes of Americus residents. Occasional balls and wedding receptions were held in the once-elegant ballroom of the Windsor Hotel. Dances for the younger set were nearly always held in the spacious hall above the Rylander Theatre. The Elks Club was the only organization with rooms for its members, but its quarters on the second floor of a West Lamar Street building were not open to ladies at anytime. The Americus Golf Club had facilities adequate only for the accommodation of golfers.

The women of Americus were avid card players, having several card clubs which had met weekly for untold years. The older women concentrated upon "42" - a game which had been in vogue for decades. There were two 42 clubs, in both of which membership frequently was passed from mother to daughter. The younger women of the community were devotees of bridge, which had gained great favor late in the 'Twenties. The passion for cards extended even to school girls, and at least three bridge clubs which were organized in grammar

school continued to meet weekly until their members went away to college.

The only purely social club for men at that time was the D. S. Club, which was composed of eligible young bachelors. Its subscription dances at Rylander Hall were the outstanding social events of the year, attracting young people from Fort Valley, Marshallville, Buena Vista, Ellaville, Albany, Leslie and Cordele.

In this same period Americus witnessed the birth and early growth of an organization which was to be an active force in many phases of community life. The Junior Welfare League was organized by a group of socially prominent young matrons who believed that by banding together they could render more effective service to their city than was possible on an individual basis. Among early members of this organization were Mrs. Charles B. King, Mrs. Arthur Rylander, Jr., Mrs. Herbert Hawkins, Mrs. Henry Lumpkin, Mrs. Charles Lanier, Mrs. William A. Dodson, Jr., Mrs. Charles F. Crisp, Mrs. James Dudley, Mrs. Robert C. Pendergrass, Mrs. George Ellis, Jr., and Mrs. Frank Sheffield, Jr.²⁶

Inspired by the example of the League, a group of high school and college girls organized the Junior Utility Club, of which Miss Mary Helen Johnson (later Mrs. Maurice Dykes) was president. Money for contributions to worthy agencies was raised through fashion shows in the spring and fall. On the occasion of the first such enterprise, the Americus Times-Recorder noted that, "The Utility Club attempted the impossible and succeeded!" This first show netted the club forty-six dollars.²⁷

A new troop of the Boy Scouts of America came into being on November 30, 1934, when Troop Number 3 was organized under the sponsorship of the First Methodist Church. The Reverend Olin L. Evans, a superannuated Methodist minister, was scoutmaster. Within two years this troop had produced two high-ranking Eagle Scouts, Reese Hearn Horton and Frank Butler, Jr.²⁸

In 1935 the Junior Chamber of Commerce sponsored a contest to select the most valuable citizen of Americus. When the votes were counted it was revealed that Dr. W. S. Prather had been named for the honor by an overwhelming majority of his fellow citizens.²⁹ The noble character, professional competence and civic consciousness of the kindly physician had endeared him to thousands of Sumter countians. Thus, even before his death on November 12, 1941, he was elevated to a permanent place among Americus' immortals.

The city suffered the loss of several of its most useful and esteemed citizens in the middle year of the 'Thirties.

Former Representative Charles R. Crisp died on February 7, 1937, only one day after enjoying a hunting trip with a party of friends.³⁰ After unsuccessfully competing with Governor Richard B. Russell, Jr., for election to the Senate in 1932, he had resigned his seat in the House to his elected successor, Bryant T. Castellow of Cuthbert, and accepted an appointment to the Tariff Commission.³¹ After less than two months, however, he resigned the latter position to engage in the practice of law in Washington as special legislative counsel for the Savannah Sugar Refining Corporation.³² In 1936 he retired and returned to his Americus home,³³ a one-story frame structure on the east side of Carr Glover's Taylor Street residence.

At the height of his political activity, Judge Crisp (as he was always known in Americus) was described thus:

"No blind partisan, he is respected by Republicans and Democrats alike for his intelligence, his parliamentary fairness, his industry...." His legislative hobby was taxes and tariffs, and it was principally due to his persistent and courageous plodding that a sales tax measure was passed in an effort to balance the budget.

"Personally," the description continued, "he is possessed of an easy and gracious manner. Short of stature, he carries his head slightly to one side; smokes cigarettes. A relatively poor man dependent upon his congressional salary, he lives modestly in Washington and maintains a home in Americus."

"...Mr. Crisp has the support of Clark Howell's Atlanta Constitution. Against him is being used the charge that, after a visit from Georgia Power Co.'s Preston Stanley Arkwright, he consented to a new provision in a revenue bill putting the electricity tax on consumers instead of producers. For him is being used the claim that he is Georgia's most distinguished statesman at the U. S. Capitol..."³⁴

Frank Lanier, president of Americus Grocery Company, died on January 12, 1935. A native of West Point, Georgia, he was born on April 9, 1863, son of William Henry and Susan (Lawson) Lanier. His father died in the Civil War and at the age of eleven young Frank had to support his mother. After establishing himself in Americus, he exerted considerable influence in the realm of local politics. He was, at the time of his death, a member of the First Methodist Church. Mr. Lanier was survived by his widow, the former Miss Mattie Hollis, and two sons, Hollis and Charles F. Lanier. The former succeeded to the presidency of the family business and, in 1938, moved the entire operation to Albany, where a branch office had been located since 1900.³⁵

On January 16, 1937, Americus lost one of its loveliest women when death claimed thirty-four year old Mrs. Ruth (Council) Prather, first wife of Stuart Holmes Prather. She was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Council and the mother of Florence (later Mrs. Arthur Penman) and (Dr.) Stuart H. Prather, Jr. Her education had been obtained at Mount Vernon Seminary and Ward-Belmont College.

"An accomplished musician, possessing an unusually beautiful voice, she was active in musical, civic, and religious life of the community. Her death was felt by friends in almost every walk of life, their devotion being attested by the exquisite and bounteous floral displays that filled the Prather home and the First Baptist church during services there, and blanketed the last resting place of the popular young matron. . . ." ³⁶

The entire community was shocked and deeply saddened on February 16, 1936, when it learned of the suicide of Professor Charles M. Hale, principal of Americus High School. A native of Spring Valley, Virginia, he was born on January 11, 1883, a son of Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Hale. A graduate of Emory and Henry College, he took post-graduate courses at Vanderbilt University and the University of Chicago. He was an ordained Methodist minister. On May 12, 1914, he was married to Miss Laura Ansley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Ansley. She survived, as did three children, Laura May, Barbara and Charles M. Hale, Jr. ³⁷

"One of the city's most beloved citizens, . . . Mr. Hale had been an instructor at Americus High School since the fall of 1912, and had been principal since 1916. During that long period of service he had endeared himself in the hearts of thousands of young people as well as the adults. . . . The library in Americus High School was a hobby of Mr. Hale's and, through his efforts, it had been built up until today it is far above the average in schools much larger than the local institution. . . . Mr. Hale gave valuable assistance to community projects and did many things in addition to his work in the schools. . . ." He was a member of the board of stewards and teacher of the Baraca Bible Class at the First Methodist Church, a charter member of the Kiwanis Club, and a member of the Sumter executive committee of the Boy Scouts of America. ³⁸

Succeeding Mr. Hale as principal of the high school was S. C. Haddock, formerly superintendent of schools at Montezuma. When J. E. Mathis, long-time superintendent of Americus schools, was named superintendent-emeritus in 1938, Mr. Haddock succeeded to the superintendency. At that time Jack Finklea, high school football coach, was named principal of the high school.

The high school building in Rees Park had long been inadequate for the large

number of pupils enrolled there. In 1937 construction was begun on a modern one-story building on Harrold Avenue at the western terminus of Dodson Street. This handsome structure was first occupied in September, 1938. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Frank Harrold presented a magnificent Murillo Madonna to hang in the entrance hall of the school as a memorial to her children, Alice (now Mrs. Harrold Morgan) and Frank W. Harrold.³⁹

In the year in which the new Americus High School was occupied, the old building was converted to use as a junior high school. At the same time, a consolidation of the high school systems of the city and county was effected. The superintendent of Sumter County schools was E. L. Bridges, a half-brother of Judge James A. Hixon and a former superintendent of the Schley County school system.

Members of the first graduating class of the new high school received their diplomas in a ceremony at the Rylander Theatre on the evening of June 1, 1939. The program was as follows:

Processional, "Priests' March" from Aida, Mendelsohn - Mrs. W. T. Maynard, organist
 Invocation - Rev. J. S. Cook, First Methodist Church
 "Nightfall" - Sung by the class
 "Which Way Peace?" - Salutatory - Charles Schneider
 "The School of Tomorrow" - Dorothy Greene
 "The Significance of The Individual" - Valedictory
 - Emily Anderson
 "The Threatened Constitution," by Vandenberg -
 Declamation - Albert Attyah
 Presentation of Awards - Superintendent S. C. Haddock
 Delivery of Diplomas - Vice-President G. C. Webb
 Alma Mater - Class
 Benediction - Dr. L. M. Polhill, First Baptist Church
 Recessional - Mrs. W. T. Maynard ⁴⁰

Shortly after work was completed upon the new high school structure, a city recreation building was begun on a Bell Street lot adjacent to it. This was completed in 1939 and Tommy Hooks, 3rd, was named athletic director of the Americus Community Center.⁴¹

Next to this building was the new baseball park, which had entrances on both Bell Street and Jackson Avenue. It was first used on July 12, 1938, at which time a capacity audience of 3,600 persons cheered the Americus Cardinals to a 2-0 victory over the Albany team.⁴²

Previous to that time, all ball games were played at the old City Playground on the south side of East Hill Street at the southern terminus of Barlow Street. The large tract of partially wooded land had originally been the site of the residence of Mr. and Mrs. D. B. Hill. Following their deaths, it was sold to the city and a ball park was laid out, a swimming pool was dug, and slides and swings were erected for the delight of childish hearts. For a number of years early in the Thirties, troops from Fort Benning camped there while on rigorous cross-country marches. As the soldiers marched from the business section out Lee Street and thence to the Playground, they invariably were followed by groups of admiring small boys.

One of the most important fixtures of the Playground in the early days was the white frame bandstand which stood near the front of the property. There local musicians were wont to display their virtuosity, chiefly on hot summer evenings. The annual July Fourth orations and picnics were held at the Playground, and music was always an important part of the celebrations.

Until the eve of the second World War, Armistice Day had always been an occasion for a special observance in Americus. All stores, offices and schools closed at eleven o'clock to devote a few minutes to honoring the heroes of World War I. These occasions afforded a marvelous opportunity for local politicians to air their sometimes synthetic, and frequently pompous interpretations of patriotism. By "patriotism" some of them appeared to mean maintaining the status quo for all white, Democratic, Protestant, Southerners who had some education, but not too much, and some money, but not too much. Their well worn cliches never failed to produce a few tears and much loud applause. There were, of course, also speakers of unquestioned sincerity, distinction and merit.

Mayors of Americus since the administration of Lee Council had been John Edgar Sheppard, a local attorney; J. E. Poole, whose family owned a low-price general store on the northeast corner of Lee and Lamar streets; J. T. Warren, local soft drink bottler; Major James A. Fort, a local attorney, who was a veteran of World War I and a son of Dr. Arthur Fort; Thomas L. Bell, a retail jeweler, who died in office, and Henry O. Jones, an attorney.⁴³

NEW BANK

The Bank of Commerce, which had been the sole local financial institution since the collapse of the Planters Bank, acquired competition in 1937. On February 7 of that year a charter was granted to the Citizens Bank of Americus which began operations on March 1 in the former Planters Bank Building. It had an initial capital stock of \$50,000. Lee Hudson, formerly cashier at the Bank of Commerce, was named president of the new bank and J. D. Shepard was named cashier.⁴⁴ Original local stockholders were T. O. Marshall, Dr. H.A. Smith and J. T. Warren.

In September of 1940, the familiar voice of the telephone operator saying, "Number, please!" was forever stilled. In that month the 1,608 local outlets of the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company were transferred from manual to dial service.⁴⁵ A two-story red brick building was erected on the west side of the first block of Forrest Avenue to accommodate the new equipment.

The Sumter County Farm Bureau was organized in that same year with J. C. Pace of Leslie as president, R. E. Glenn as vice president, and J. Lewis Ellis as secretary-treasurer.⁴⁶

A handsome new two-story brick Sunday School building for the First Baptist Church was erected early in the Forties. Situated on Lee Street between the church and the home of Mrs. J. W. Hightower, it was designed to supplement the original Sunday School building at the rear of the church. Dr. L. M. Polhill was pastor at that time, having succeeded the Reverend O. M. Seigler. He, in turn, was succeeded by the Reverend David J. Evans.

Several Americus men were chosen for high positions in a variety of endeavors in this period. John Sheffield was named district governor of Rotary International and T. O. Marshall was named district governor of the Kiwanis club.⁴⁷ Stephen Pace was elected to represent the Third Congressional District succeeding Bryant T. Castellow of Cuthbert. Hawkins Dykes was named co-editor of the Georgia Bar Association's journal.⁴⁸ Allen Chappell, former state senator and representative, was elected public service commissioner of Georgia.⁴⁹ Edward B. Everett, Jr. was named to the State's pardon and parole board,⁵⁰ while Wallace B. Sheffield was named to the Aeronautic Advisory Board.⁵¹ James W. Smith, county attorney, succeeded Judge W. M. Harper on the bench of city court,⁵² while Hollis Fort, Jr., became solicitor of that court.⁵³ Sion Boone Hawkins was appointed by Governor Eugene Talmadge to the post of adjutant general of Georgia.⁵⁴ William Madison Harper, former city court judge, succeeded Zera A. Littlejohn as judge of Sumter superior court.⁵⁵

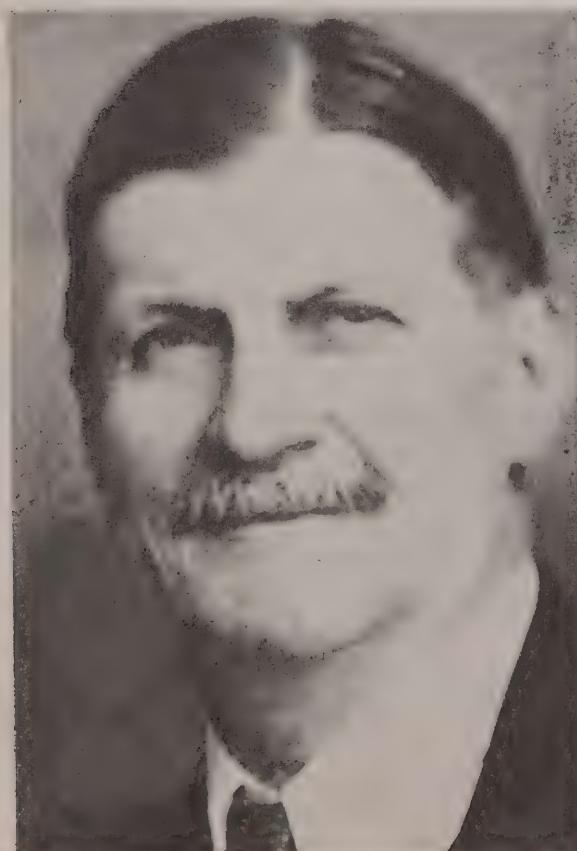
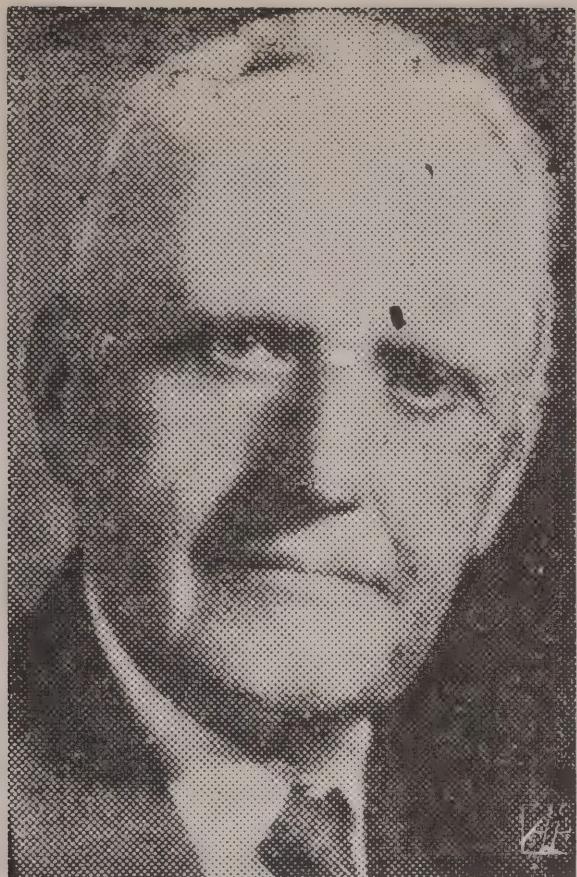
In 1936 the Americus chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy sponsored the organization of the Allene Walker Harrold Chapter, Children of the Confederacy. It was named in honor of Mrs. Frank P. Harrold, former president general of the UDC. The state convention of the Children of the Confederacy was held in Americus on June 16-17, 1938. Officers of the local chapter at that time were:

George O. Marshall, Jr. - president
 Lanelle Smith - first vice president
 Constance Lott - second vice president
 Georgia Lane - secretary
 Frances Bailey - historian ⁵⁶

Several attractive new residences were built in Americus during the 'Thirties and early 'Forties. Among these were the two-story white frame house which Wallace Sheffield and his first wife, the former Miss Margaret Owen of Cuthbert, built on the Macon Road (it later became the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Wingate Dykes) across from the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Gatewood, Jr.; the white brick residence of Mr. and Mrs. William J. Graham (later owned by Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Pace) across from Mrs. T. O. Marshall's estate; the one-story red brick cottages of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sheffield, Jr. and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lumpkin, the former on Brown Street and the latter on Lee Street just south of the E. J. Eldridge (originally A. W. Smith) residence on the south west corner of Lee and Bell streets; the two-story white brick home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Rylander, Jr. on Lee Street between the homes of J. A. Pinkston and T. F. Gatewood; the one-story white brick residence of Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Dodson, Jr. on the southeast corner of Bell street and Hancock Avenue, later Drive, (later the home of Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Jones); the one-story red brick home of Mrs. George Oliver, constructed on the site of her earlier frame house on East Church Street, and the one-story white frame house of Dr. and Mrs. S. A. Scruggs (later owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Teaford) on the northwest corner of Hancock Avenue and Dodson Street.

One of the most beautiful homes ever built in Americus was the English-style fieldstone residence of Mr. and Mrs. T. O. Marshall, which was placed in the middle of a vast wooded tract on the Macon Road, just north of where the Sheffield-Dykes home later was built. The property was beautifully landscaped, a lake was created, and interesting wooden gates were hung between fieldstone entrance walls. Mrs. Marshall had recently inherited a fortune from her uncle, Daniel Rountree, a distinguished Atlanta attorney. By virtue of her unassuming graciousness, her numberless acts of quiet personal charity, and her charm of person and manner, this stately white-haired lady became one of the most admired women in Americus.

Among noteworthy weddings which occurred in this period were the brilliant ceremonies at the First Methodist Church which united Miss Louise Wise, daughter of Dr. Thad Wise, and Henry St. George Teaford; Miss Martha Pace, daughter of Representative Stephen Pace, and William D. Swift of Columbus, and Misses Eleanor and Hazel Haddock, daughters of S. C. Haddock, and Ike Farmer and Carl Ryals, respectively. Miss Georgia Bahnsen, daughter of Dr. Peter F. Bahnsen, was married to Jack Fuson of St. Joseph, Missouri, in an elaborate ceremony at the First Baptist Church; Miss Alice Harrold, daughter of Frank P. Harrold, became the bride of Howard Morgan in a beautiful ceremony at Calvary Episcopal Church, and Miss Martha Marshall, daughter of T. O. Marshall, was married to Wingate Dykes, son of W. W. Dykes, in a lovely ceremony in the garden of her parents' country home.



TWENTIETH CENTURY LEADERS: (*top, left*) Lee George Council, (*right*) Judge Zera Alphonso Littlejohn, (*lower, left*) Dr. William Stuart Prather, (*right*) the Reverend James Bolan Lawrence, D.D.

WORLD WAR II

From September 3, 1939, when Great Britain and France declared war upon Germany in an effort to stop the Nazi war machine from conquering all of Europe, it became increasingly evident that the United States would become involved in a great global war. The country was not prepared from the stand-points of manpower or of materiel. There was an immediate move to increase the size of the Army and the Navy and to convert the country's industrial plants to the manufacture of guns, tanks and planes. The American people, however, were not psychologically prepared for war, so, despite the urgency of the situation, conversion was slow.

On October 16, 1940, the nation's young men registered for the first peace-time manpower draft in history. On December 14 of that year it was announced that Souther Field had been selected as the site for an Army primary aviation training school.⁵⁷

The announcement was made by T. O. Marshall, chairman of the Sumter County Commission; S. S. Hudson, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and William J. Graham, of the Graham Aviation Company of Pittsburgh.⁵⁸

The Graham Company had contracted with the War Department to give training to student flyers. The work of rebuilding Souther Field was begun under a Works Progress Administration project calling for the expenditure of some \$329,000.⁵⁹

In June a group of fifty-three British cadets arrived to take the ten-week primary course. Included in the group were Irishmen, Walchmen (sic), Scots-men and Englishmen. They were met at the Central of Georgia depot by a large crowd of Americus people. All of the cadets had survived a frantic Atlantic chase by the German battleship Bismark.⁶¹

One of the cadets was Geoffrey A. H. Burt, a journalist from Somerset, England. He later wrote an interesting article in which he recorded the cadets' reactions to life in the United States as seen from the vantage point of Americus. Under the heading "Bugs With Rear Lights; They Are Among Georgia's Wonders That Astonished British Flying Cadets At Americus," he wrote of the exquisitely dressed, charming and witty Americus girls and of his amazement at the way adults consumed cola drinks that, in England, were used to pacify children while their elders partook of more potent refreshment.

"The great use you make of your Christian names," he continued, "is a novelty. You can know people quite a long while in England without knowing their names...."

When the cadets went to a dance they were advised by a U. S. lieutenant "...to cut in - and cut in often. It was expected of us. This admonition filled us with horror, since it is a thing never done at home....

"We have seen new and, for us fairylike crops of watermelons, peanuts, corn and cotton ..." and great peach orchards laden with delicate fruits such as had hitherto been seen only in glass houses as oddities.

"Perhaps most interesting of all are the colored people in your midst ... whom you hail as aunties, and who, in turn, call you honeythey are a never-failing source of interest to us....." as their black hands silently reach over our shoulders to place food before us and as they work in the fields and sit on the porches of their shacks in the cool of eventide.

Cadet Birt went on to say that Americus people were so friendly. He said a stranger would pick up one of the group, introduce himself, give detailed biographical information, and conclude by saying for the cadet to make himself completely at home because the stranger was one of them: "We are with you! My grandfather was a Cockney. -- Yes sir!" 62

Through the grim years of World War II, when defeat lurked behind every news flash from the fighting fronts, Americus did its best to contribute to the war effort. Men by the hundreds left schools and colleges; offices, stores and farms; wives, children and parents, to join the Army, Navy, Marine Corps Army Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine, or to work in essential industries. And not only men; women, too, donned the uniform of the Armed Forces, the overalls of a defense worker, the grey-and-white uniforms of the Red Cross volunteer. The people left behind at home did their part by taking in their stride such minor inconveniences as gasoline rationing; shortages of choice food items, stockings and wearing apparel, and the housing shortage occasioned by the influx of servicemen. Americus men and women became air raid wardens, nurses aides, workers at canteens for servicemen, and friends and counselors to lonely young men from all over the world.

As a sixth War Loan drive ended late in 1944, Chairman J. T. Warren announced that Sumter County had not achieved its goal of \$612,000. However, Mrs. Arthur Rylander, Jr., chairman of the ladies' campaign in the residential sections of Americus, reported that one of her ten sections had raised more than \$34,000. This hard-working group was composed of Mrs. Carr S. Glover, Mrs. Ted Echman, Mrs. Ray Ansley, Mrs. Charles Hogg, Jr., Miss Etta Mae Nix, Mrs. H. Davidson and Mrs. Brown Small, Jr. 63

When at last victory came on a hot August day in 1945, Americus and Sumter

County paused to honor their gallant sons who would never again walk the city's familiar streets, but whose memory would be forever enshrined in the hearts of their fellow citizens.

In addition to those persons previously named, Americus lost a large number of good and useful citizens in the years 1930 through 1945. Among these were Judge Zera Alphonso Littlejohn, who died on May 3, 1932, after presiding over Sumter Superior Court longer than any jurist had previously served any similar court in Georgia; Reese Herbert Horton, oil and gasoline distributor and former state legislator, who died on March 13, 1936; Judge James Augustus Hixon, noted jurist, attorney and former mayor, who died in 1940; and Thomas Oliver Marshall, attorney, bank director and active civic and church worker, who died in 1945.⁶⁴

Doctors Emmett Bernard Anderson and Samuel Paul Wise, two popular Americus physicians, both died in the early Forties. For many years they, together with Doctors Herschel A. Smith and Burr Thaddeus Wise, had operated the Wise, Smith & Anderson Clinic in the former YMCA building. The Wise brothers, in company with Dr. Bowman Wise, had previously operated a hospital in their native Plains. Dr. Anderson's widow, the former Miss Emily Heath of Talbotton, subsequently became the wife of Homer McDaniel of Washington, D. C. Dr. Sam Wise was unmarried. Dr. Thad Wise was the widower of the former Miss Louise Lamar, one of Americus' most attractive and widely known women. They were the parents of Louise (Mrs. George Teaford), Sarah (Mrs. Frank Turpin, Jr.), Laura (Mrs. John Powell), Jean and Dr. Samuel Paul Wise, 3rd.

Lee George Council, who in the 'Twenties had been one of the most powerful financial and political figures in the history of Americus, died in 1945. Formerly president of the Planters Bank of Americus, he had served the city as mayor and at one time had been president of the Windsor Hotel Company and publisher of the Americus Times-Recorder. Long an active and generous member of the First Methodist Church, he was at the time of his death a member of its official board, as well as being a county commissioner and a field representative for the War Manpower Commission.⁶⁵

Sumter County's last veteran of the Civil War passed from the local scene on November 7, 1936, when death claimed ninety-one year old G. E. Johnson. His proud boast had been that he had shaken General Robert E. Lee's hand following the latter's surrender at Appomattox.⁶⁶

Chapter XII

THE YEARS OF GREATEST CHANGE

(1946 - 1956)

With World War II behind them, the people of Americus confidently looked forward to a return to the easy, gracious life they had known in the past. How nice it would be to be free of shortages of silk stockings, automobiles, gasoline, shirts and many other items necessary to twentieth century America! Best of all, hundreds of local men and women would be returning from wartime service in many parts of the world.

But "The Garden Spot of Dixie," as Americus proudly termed itself, was in for a rude shock. True, there was a return to the more leisurely pace of former days. True, the shortages of manufactured items disappeared within eighteen months after the end of the war. True, there were joyous homecomings as local heroes returned to fill their accustomed places in the community.

The city gradually realized, however, that many native sons were not coming home. At first their continued absence occasioned only casual comment. It was said that some young men found Americus too slow and provincial after the great cities they had visited during three or more years in uniform. When it became apparent, however, that many of those who had returned were eventually leaving again, some of the more progressive citizens thoughtfully considered the probable reasons for the exodus. They concluded that Americus had little to offer ambitious young men and women who had no family business to which they could return, or no interest in farming Sumter County's fertile acres.

These business leaders discussed the situation with growing concern. They decided that something must be done to attract and retain the city's young people, for Americus would suffer in the years ahead if it were now deprived of its potential leaders.

The necessity for positive action was not immediately apparent to the populace as a whole. Americus had for too long been complacent about any type of change. Indeed, it was a matter of local pride that the little city had discouraged new businesses from locating there; life had always been pleasant and rewarding enough without a lot of strangers around. Look at Albany, which once had been smaller than Americus, and which now was a hustling metropolis with thousands of new people from heaven knew where. They had strange names and nothing at all was known about their family backgrounds. Progress was all right, of course, but one would have to go a long way to beat Americus.

Combatting a lack of interest on the part of many people, and the calculated

discouragement of some of the families which had controlled its fortunes for many years, Americus nevertheless decided that it would woo and win not only native sons and daughters, but also new businesses.

The Chamber of Commerce took the initiative by hiring a full-time manager to replace the part-time female secretary who had handled its affairs for many years. The person chosen for the post was J. P. Luther, former advertising manager of the Americus Times-Recorder. A friendly, gregarious man with a wide circle of acquaintances throughout the state and a boundless store of energy and enthusiasm, he was an ideal choice for the job.

Under Mr. Luther's leadership and with the support of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, and other local civic organizations, an aggressive program was designed to exploit Americus' advantages as a center for business and light industry. Before long the campaign was supported by a majority of local residents. It resulted in a civic consciousness such as the city had never previously known. Businesses and homes were freshened and modernized, and new residents were welcomed with a sincerity and friendliness that formerly had been exhibited only after newcomers had lived in Americus for several years.

The success of the campaign was clearly illustrated on July 21, 1953, when the city was host to some twenty-five thousand persons for a unique observance called "Manufacturers' Day." Special honors were accorded thirty-six manufacturers who had chosen Americus as the site for their operations.¹

Reported The Atlanta Journal: "With lovely Neva Jane Langley of Macon presiding as 'Miss America of 1953,' Americus has proclaimed to the world its growing status as a center of industry.

"Thousands of visitors from all sections of the state flocked to the southwest Georgia city Tuesday for the colorful celebration of 'Manufacturers' Day.' Sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the program included a two-mile long parade, a community barbecue and a grand ball at the American Legion Home...

"Sumter County long has been famed as one of the nation's finest agricultural centers. Manufacturers' Day was designed to tell another story - the growing might of Americus as a city of industry.

"It was superbly presented in gorgeous floats, each representing a distinct accomplishment.... Americus streets were gaily decorated for M-Day and the city police were good-will ambassadors, making everyone feel welcome and at ease..."²

"...There is a lesson in the census figures, too, about what has happened in Americus and Sumter County. In 1930, the county had a population of 26,800. By 1940, this had dropped to 24,502 as farm workers were displaced by the depression and migrated to cities in search of opportunity. Few of them stopped at Americus. During the decade 1940 - 1950, however, this migration, while not stopped, was slowed down to a trickle as Americus and Sumter leaders sought ways and means of providing opportunity at home.

"The population of Americus grew from 9,281 in 1940 to 11,389 in 1950. Improved farming methods and rural electrification arrested some of the drift from the land...."³

The success of Americus' efforts to achieve a balance between agriculture and industry was crowned at the highly successful Manufacturers' Day observance. The entire city cooperated in displaying to the world what could be accomplished when all segments of a community work together for the common good. The Junior Chamber of Commerce, sponsor of the observance, was ably assisted by the senior chamber. Leonard Waitsman was president of the former and T. O. Marshall, Jr., was president of the latter.⁴

The largest industries in Americus at that time were Manhattan Shirt Company, which employed 700 persons; Dayton Veneer and Lumber Company and Jacobs Lumber Company, both of which had about 300 employees; Shiver Lumber Company, which employed 150 persons, and McCleskey Mills, which employed between 40 and 140 persons, depending upon the season. In addition, some 200 men and women were employed by the repair shops and refueling station of the Seaboard Railway.⁵

The Manhattan concern had been an Americus industry since 1936,⁶ at which time it was located in a building at the intersection of Lamar and Forsyth streets. Under the capable management of Mathew Roughgarden, it was moved to a new and larger building in 1953. The site of its new operation was the east side of Tripp Street, which had recently been cut through property at the eastern boundary of Oak Grove Cemetery. In 1956 Mr. Roughgarden retired as manager and was succeeded by Walter Knowlton, a native of Americus.

The Dayton firm also had arrived in 1936, locating at Souther Field. Originally a branch of the main factory at Dayton, Tennessee, it subsequently became the company's only factory. President Wallace Haggard directed the annual manufacture of five million fruit and vegetable baskets.⁷

One of the new industries was Gertrude Davenport, Inc., which manufactured terry cloth sports clothes. It was moved to Americus from New York City,

where it had been remarkably successful.⁸ Founder Gertrude Davenport was a native of Americus, being a daughter of James A. Davenport.

A combination of civic aggressiveness and the post-war availability of building materials resulted in the erection of many small business edifices throughout Americus in the decade following World War II. Forsyth Street, which had been extended west of Cotton Avenue in the late 'Thirties after the city bought large blocs of property from Eston Buchanan in order to connect that street to the new bridge over the Central of Georgia tracks, was the site of many of these structures.

In this same period Americus witnessed the construction of the greatest number of new houses in its entire history. Most of them were built on property located south of Dodson Street and west of Hancock Drive (formerly Avenue).

Beginning in 1950, the Americus Times-Recorder, which was to become the only local newspaper when James R. Blair bought The Tri-County News in 1953,⁹ listed in nearly every issue the names of new residents who had been attracted by the business and professional opportunities afforded by the revitalized Americus. These people became good citizens and their presence, somewhat to the surprise of a few die-hards, meant a higher income for every local businessman. Competition, it seemed, could mean growth and prosperity instead of a curtailment of profits.

LEADERS OF TOMORROW

Among the outstanding young men who moved to Americus in the decade 1946-1956 were five who had close ties with the city.

Henry Latimer Collier, a native of Atlanta and an official of the Bank of Commerce, was a descendant of two noted local families. He was a grandson of Mrs. Nettie (Sheffield) Collier and a great-grandson of J. W. Sheffield. His mother, the former Miss Christine Hooper, was a daughter of Judge Frank Hooper of Atlanta, formerly presiding jurist of the Southwestern judicial circuit.

Hiram Undercofler, an attorney and a native of Pennsylvania, had been an Air Force Major stationed at Souther Field during World War II. Later he received a law degree from the University of Georgia. His wife was the former Miss Flora Gatewood, daughter of T. F. Gatewood, Jr.

Hulme Kinnebrew, proprietor of a newly-established men's clothing store bearing his name, was the husband of the former Miss Nancy Duckworth, daugh-

ter of Jerry R. Duckworth and Mrs. Kara (Borders) Carswell. Mr. Kinnebrew's mother and step-father, Dr. and Mrs. David Price, subsequently established their home in Americus.

Samuel Rountree Hunter, a vice president of the Citizens Bank of Americus, was a native of Quitman and a nephew of Mrs. T. O. Marshall. His wife was the former Miss Martha Ann Wootten, daughter of Paul Wootten, local coal dealer.

Charles C. Smith, a native of Augusta and a graduate of Fordham, was vice president and general manager (later sole owner) of Radio Station WDEC. His wife was the former Miss Sue Marshall, daughter of local seed store proprietor George O. Marshall. An affiliate of the Mutual Broadcasting System, WDEC had begun operations in 1947 under the ownership of the Americus Times-Recorder.

These men, together with T. O. Marshall, Jr., Frank Myers, Wingate Dykes, Walter Rylander, John W. Sheffield, Jr., John Flatt, Broadus Wiloughby, Don Farr, Charles R. Crisp, Thomas D. Warren, Eugene O. MacDonald, Ed Hutchison, and others, early asserted an active leadership in the city's affairs. Prototypes of the best leaders of the past, they became architects of the Americus of the future.

The influx of new residents provided a stimulus to religious activities. Saint Mary's Catholic Church, which had been served by a visiting priest from Albany prior to World War II, acquired a resident priest to minister to the needs of the greatly expanded parish. Several new denominations were added to the list of local Protestant churches, among which were Saint Paul's Lutheran Chapel, at 947 Felder Street, and Church of Christ, which erected a house of worship on the old Gyles property at the southeast corner of Lee and Hill streets.

Calvary Episcopal Church erected a beautiful new parish hall at the rear of its sanctuary, replacing the ancient original church edifice. It was named Lawrence Hall in honor of the parish's long-time rector, the Reverend James Bolan Lawrence. When Mr. Lawrence retired in 1946, he was succeeded by the Reverend William C. Baxter, who served from 1947 until the middle of 1952. The next rector, the Reverend John Jenkins, served until his death early in 1954. He was succeeded by the Reverend Paul Ritch.¹⁰

The First Methodist Church, which had numbered among its recent pastors the Reverends Horace T. Freeman, Joseph S. Cook, Mack Anthony, James Wilson, Monroe Yarborough and Wade E. Scott, became the first local church to install an air conditioning system. The equipment, which cost \$25,000, was placed in operation in June, 1955.¹¹

The congregation of the Central Baptist Church formulated plans for expansion of its plant to cope with what was reputed to be the most rapid growth of any local church. It bought the former residence of W. D. Bailey,

which adjoined its property to the south, and announced plans for the eventual construction of a new building on the site. The Reverend M. C. Gardner was pastor.

The First Baptist Church announced long-range plans for construction of a new sanctuary, class rooms and offices. A special committee was named to obtain additional property and to devise plans for the new buildings. Serving on the committee were: R. L. LeSueur, chairman; J. W. Lott, co-chairman; J. E. B. McLendon, A. B. Woodard, G. A. Tye, Broadus Willoughby, Frank Myers, Dr. A. C. Kimble, Mrs. A. D. Gatewood, Jr., and Mrs. Luther Ivey, Jr. 12

A new and welcome addition to Americus' social and athletic life was acquired shortly after World War II when the Americus Country Club was organized and opened to almost anyone who would subscribe to its stock. It was a result of an earlier merger of the D. S. Club and the Americus Golf Club. An attractive club house was erected on the former Golf Club property, a swimming pool was created, and the golf course was increased to eighteen holes.

A second center of social activity was developed by the Americus lodge of Elks when that organization bought Mrs. Lee Council's home and its extensive grounds. The American Legion also acquired property suitable for dances and other forms of entertainment.

Social activities in this period were not centered around weddings quite so much as in the past, but they continued to provide an excuse for a gay round of pre-nuptial parties. And that pleasant local phenomenon, the high school graduate, was entertained just as frequently and just as lavishly as she had been for the past thirty years. It is doubtful that New York's most popular debutantes ever received more flattering attentions than did Americus' sweet girl graduates.

The Americus City Hall was remodeled and enlarged in 1949 to provide adequate office space for the administration of local affairs. Aldermen at that time were Theo Baldwin, P. R. Bynum, H. G. Teaford, T. C. Tillman, Jr., A. C. Bell and Charles Glover. 13

As a preliminary step to the remodeling, the 100-foot high brick water tower which had loomed above the building since 1887 was removed. The passing of the old landmark evoked nostalgic memories in local residents,¹⁴ who were not yet accustomed to the absence of the two downtown monuments to Americus' heroes in the Civil War and World War I. The former, a white marble figure of a Confederate soldier, had stood at the intersection of Lee and Forsyth streets; the latter, a cast iron replica of a "Doughboy," had stood on the site of the old artesian well at the intersection of Lee and Lamar streets. Both monuments were moved to Rees Park during World War II in an effort to relieve vehicular congestion on downtown streets.

Americus and Sumter County dedicated a beautiful new \$2,000,000 hospital on December 14, 1952.¹⁵ Situated on the north side of East Lamar Street, it was erected on a large wooded tract upon which the late Crawford Wheatley had once proposed to build a palatial residence for his family. The fieldstone gate posts erected for Mr. Wheatley provided an imposing entrance to the beautiful grounds of the new hospital.

The hospital initially had a capacity of one hundred and ten white patients. Subsequently a forty-bed wing was constructed for the care of Negro patients, replacing the independent Negro hospital. The old city Hospital building on Dodson Street was turned over to the county for use as office space, the principal users being the Health and Welfare departments.¹⁶

In 1955 Georgia Southwestern College entered into an arrangement with Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta whereby young women at the college who were interested in a nursing career could spend slightly more than one year at Grady as exchange student nurses. Upon completion of the course at the hospital and after an 84-day training period in psychiatric nursing at Milledgeville State Hos-



ENTRANCE TO G.S.C.

ital, the students would return to G. S. C. for six months of additional study. The first group of six young women to participate in this program arrived at Grady Hospital in March, 1955. ¹⁷

Georgia Southwestern College acquired a new \$220,000 classroom building in the fall of that year. The attractive structure was designed to provide laboratories for the natural sciences, general classrooms, and a 438-seat auditorium. President Lloyd A. Moll announced that the enrollment had increased somewhat after a sharp decline in 1952-53. He reported that the college received an annual allocation from the state of \$86,400, which amounted to an average of \$281.00 per student.¹⁸

Several years after the end of World War II, the state of Georgia established one of its two industrial schools at Americus. The South Georgia Trade and Vocational School was located at Souther Field in buildings valued at \$500,000, and with some four hundred acres of land for use by the students. Free tuition was available for the entire eighteen-month course. Included in the curriculum were such varied courses as automotive and aircraft mechanics, radio and television repair, cabinet making and practical nursing. ²⁰

The Americus public schools faced a crisis early in the 'Fifties when the record crop of war-time babies began to enroll in the primary grades. Furlow Grammar School was forced to have double sessions in order to accommodate all of the first and second grade pupils. As a result of this situation, a \$240,000 bond issue to provide for the construction of new classrooms was approved in 1956. The measure received only seventy negative votes, but it revealed a shocking public apathy: only 700 out of 3,200 qualified voters bothered to go to the polls. ²¹

A crisis of a different nature, and one infinitely more important at the moment, was precipitated by the Supreme Court of the United States on May 17, 1954, when it ruled that racial segregation in the nation's public schools was unconstitutional. This decision was met with howls of indignation from throughout the South.

In Americus, Judge James W. Smith of the city court said,

"The Supreme Court cannot seem to pass on anything in which politics is not included. If they can overrule a Supreme Court decision which has been the law for over 50 years, then they should overrule their action of this week. If they don't, then we should do away with Congress and let the Supreme Court be both Congress and the Supreme Court." 22

State Representative Sherrard Horne took a calmer view of the situation, saying, "I think the decision has upset everyone, but we must keep a level head and try to find some way to maintain separate schools." 23

Mayor Pro-Tem George Teaford followed a similar line, saying, "We should keep both feet on the ground and think through every phase of the subject. It is our best defense." 24

The official board of the First Methodist Church adopted a resolution emphatically opposing the action of the General Conference of the Methodist Church in approving permissible integration on a voluntary basis. 25

The Americus Times-Recorder's calm appraisal of the realities of the situation served to temper public reaction.

"The Supreme Court's ruling," it stated, "is mild and about as flexible as the South could expect. Tuesday's ruling indicates that members of the high court at last recognize the realities of life. No law or regulation can be stronger than the public sentiment behind it. If the 'public interest' is seriously taken into consideration as suggested by the high court, then it will be many years before the schools in most communities of the South are desegregated." 26

While most Americus residents may have regretted the decision because it would mean a drastic change in long-accepted standards, and while many actively resented it as an intrusion upon "states' rights," yet there were some who thoughtfully recognized it as another step in the long and tortuous road toward the goal of making the United States a place of equal privileges and opportunities for all citizens without regard to race, creed or color.

There were, however, persons to whom social equality always meant Social equality. Under an Americus dateline, The Atlanta Journal reported:

"Political leaders of Georgia have called for a 'great crusade' on the county level to prevent mixing the races in a move which openly defied U. S.

Supreme Court decisions on segregation.

"Plans were outlined Wednesday at the first grass roots meeting of the States Rights Council of Georgia, Inc., before a cheering overflow crowd of 600 persons jammed into the Sumter County Courthouse in this southwest Georgia city.

"Governor Marvin Griffin.... [said] that he 'did not believe in the decisions of the Supreme Court'..... Former Governor Herman Talmadge said he felt that '.... regardless of what the Supreme Court says, does or thinks that by the grace of God, Georgia will continue running its own affairs.'...." 27

Subsequent local developments were noted by the daily Americus newspaper as follows:

"Sumter became the seventh county in the Third Congressional District to organize a county unit of the States' Rights Council of Ga., Inc. Friday night when about 175 persons met at the local courthouse to approve preliminaries necessary for the establishment of a chapter.

"Herbert Moon, prominent local citizen and a former member of the State Legislature, presided at the affair during which he read the policies and constitution of the body. The meeting opened with a prayer led by the Reverend M. F. Reeves of Americus and a welcome extended by Sherrard Horne, former county representative to the legislature.

"Charles F. Crisp, Jack McArthur and Joseph Daniel were appointed by Mr. Moon as a committee to nominate officers for the county chapter. The nominations were approved by those present and the following will serve as officers:

"President, Eugene Horne; 1st vice-president, Spencer Pryor; 2nd vice-president, Rev. W. L. Alford; 3rd vice-president, Rudy Hayes; secretary, W. E. (Billy) Smith; and treasurer, Charles R. Crisp...." 28

A short time later Americus and Sumter County were catapulted into the national limelight as a result of activities at a bi-racial communal farm on the outskirts.

The farm had been established in 1942 on four hundred acres of land as a non-profit religious corporation, and its doors were open to all men without division according to race or color. Founder Clarence Jordan, a native white Georgian who had earned a Ph. D. in Greek New Testament, was said to be a "very devoted Christian.... [who] had an idea that the teachings of the New Testament should be lived daily." He named the establishment Koinonia (coin-o-nee'-ah), a Greek term for fellowship, and credited his inspiration to Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37. 29

One of the many national publications which reported upon developments of the farm stated:

".....For years the people of Americus took little notice of 'those race mixers.' But after the Supreme Court desegregation decision in 1954 [and after] Clarence Jordan endorsed the applications of two Negroes for admission to Georgia State College of Business Administration [in Atlanta], things began to happen. There were anonymous phone calls; the roadside signs were ripped down at night; retailers turned down Koinonia produce... Then came dynamite - three sticks of it - which blew up the farm's roadside produce stand..."

"Some people in Americus were shocked. Others said: 'I'll bet those queer nigger-lovers did it themselves. We ought to run them out of the county.'...." 30

The situation worsened rapidly, and because of it the Americus area received more unfavorable publicity than at any time since the nation was shocked by the scandals which emanated from Anderson Prison Camp during the Civil War.

In addition to shooting and other physical harassments, a highly effective economic boycott was utilized in an attempt to oust the group. Jordan and his followers, however, were adamant in their determination to "continue the struggle for redemption and reconciliation, no matter how difficult it might be for all concerned." The bullet-pierced welcome sign in front of Koinonia, which pictured a Christian cross and a pair of clasped hands, bore mute testimony to the intensity of the emotions which gripped the farm's leaders on the one hand and the aroused citizens of Sumter County on the other. 31

LOCAL CITIZENS HONORED

While the community uneasily awaited a solution to the most explosive problems to face it since the dark days prior to 1861, Americus continued to contribute men and women to high positions and for special recognition in a variety of endeavors. Among those so honored in the nineteen fifties were: Mrs. Stewart Colley of Grantville, the former Miss Mary Fort of Americus, who was chosen president of the United Church Women of Georgia; 32 Mrs. Hudson Malone of Albany, the former Miss Katie Sue Rees of Americus, who was named editor of Garden Gateways, official publication the Garden Clubs of Georgia;33 B. Fred Statham, a local farmer, who was elected president of the Georgia Association of Soil Conservation Supervisors;34 Wingate Dykes, an attorney, who was named to the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association;35 Allen Chappell, a member of the State Public Service Commission since 1940, who was elected vice-chairman of that body in 1953;36 Arthur W. Fort, brilliant younger son of John Allen Fort, who was awarded a fellowship from the National Science Foundation for advanced study in chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Tech-

nology; ³⁷ John Argo, seventeen-year old Boy Scout, who represented four southeastern states in a good-will tour of Europe sponsored by the U. S. Air Force; ³⁸ Charles Hogg, Jr. prominent young businessman, who received a special citation from the Daughters of the American Revolution for his outstanding contributions in the realms of civic activity, church work and Boy Scouting; ³⁹ Miss Martha Cobb, who received special recognition upon her retirement in 1956 after twenty-four years of service as home demonstration agent for Sumter County; ⁴⁰ Clarence Graddick, sports editor of the Americus Times-Recorder, who was named by the Associated Press as first-place winner among Class A Georgia newspapers in its annual sportswriting contest; ⁴¹ Miss Miriam Barnes, lovely young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James M. Barnes, who was named "Miss Sumter County of 1956"; ⁴² Mrs. Sam Merritt, who was elected first vice regent of the Georgia Society, D. A. R.; ⁴³ Mrs. J. M. Cheatham of Griffin, the former Miss Elizabeth Mathis of Americus, who was named Woman of the Year in Griffin; ⁴⁴ Marion B. Folsom, husband of the former Miss Mary Davenport (daughter of the Reverend T. E. Davenport) of Americus, who was selected by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to become the nation's second Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. ⁴⁵ In 1956 the Americus Junior Chamber of Commerce name Fox Stephens, a young businessman, to receive its Distinguished Service Award for outstanding community service. Previous winners had been J. C. Logan, T. O. Marshall, Jr., Pete Phyne and Dr. Harold Clayton. ⁴⁶

An Americus man was awarded the nation's highest military decoration when the Congressional Medal of Honor was posthumously bestowed upon nineteen-year old Private First Class Luther H. Story, United States Army, for extreme heroism in the Korean Conflict, 1950-52. ⁴⁷ A former Americus man, Major Walter D. Phillips, Jr., also lost his life in this "police action." A regular Marine Corps officer, he was a grandson of the late John T. Taylor.

FIRST SOLAR PHONE CALL

Americus received world-wide attention on October 4, 1955, when the giant American Telephone and Telegraph Company inaugurated the first practical application of a so-called solar battery in an attempt to harness the sun's rays. ⁴⁸

Farmer George L. Mathews had the distinction of making the first sun-powered telephone call, to cotton warehouseman E. E. Summerford several miles from his home.

The number of telephones in service in Americus at that time had passed the 4,500 mark. Paul Westbrook, veteran local manager who had retired in 1946, was succeeded by Orin Neihaus. The latter, in turn, was succeeded by Lane Watson in 1950. ⁴⁹

Officials of the Americus Public School System in 1956 were K. L. Carpenter, superintendent; W. C. Mundy, high school principal; S. G. Summerhill, junior high school principal, and Mrs. John H. Morgan, grammar school principal. The latter had succeeded Miss Sarah P. Cobb in 1948 when the beloved Furlow principal retired after thirty-five years in office.

In announcing the appointments of teachers for the 1956-1957 school term, Superintendent Carpenter paid tribute to Mrs. E. B. Hill and Mrs. Ethel W. Robinson, who had retired after many years of devoted service to the city's educational program. 50

The Board of Education was composed of Mayor J. E. Logan, Sam Lott, Mrs. H. L. Howell, G. W. Harris, W. R. Moyd, Mrs. T. B. Hooks, 3rd., Dr. Elmo Davis, J. H. Harvey, Melvin Tye, W. R. Morton, Mrs. Mack Furlow and William E. Smith. 51

City officials were J. E. Logan, mayor; C. E. Thompson, mayor pro-tem; A. D. Gatewood, Jr., clerk and treasurer; H. K. Henderson, fire chief; V. L. Autry, police chief; G. E. Ansley, superintendent of public works; Z. A. Littlejohn, Jr., marshal; Dr. Bon Durham, physician; Jack Murr, attorney, and W. T. Lane, Jr., recorder. 52

The superintendent of the Sumter County School system was W. W. Foy, who had succeeded E. L. Bridges in 1949.

Two Americus men, Jack Murr and Charles Burgamy, were Sumter County's representatives to the General Assembly. The Third Congressional District's representative was E. L. Forrester of Leesburg, who had succeeded Stephen Pace in 1951. The United States senator for the region of which Sumter County was a part was Walter F. George of Vienna.

In addition to those previously mentioned, the following pastors filled the pulpits of Americus churches in 1956:

Lee Street Methodist, Reverend Edward H. Carruth; First Baptist, Dr. C. L. Leopard; Brooklyn Heights Baptist, Reverend H. W. Patterson; First Christian, Reverends W. A. Joyner and A. A. Hyde; First Presbyterian, Reverend N. G. Barron; Saint Mary's Catholic, Reverend Henry L. Madden; Pilgrim Holiness, Reverend James Flexon; Church of the Nazarene, Deloss Thompson; Church of Christ, Edgar N. Srygley; Saint Paul's Lutheran, Reverend G. Leonard Nicholas; Americus Assembly of God, A. V. Hendrick. 53

As Americus neared the end of the first quarter of its second century, growth and prosperity were unmistakably evidenced in all phases of community life. In 1955 a little over \$2,690,000 was spent for construction of 144 new homes and several commercial plants. This was a record without

parallel in the city's entire history.⁵⁴ The installation of a natural gas distribution system costing \$582, 000 provided an attractive inducement to potential new businesses and industries.⁵⁵ In the same year, the Water Department laid approximately 12,615 feet of sanitary sewer extensions and 8,000 feet of water mains.⁵⁶ In 1956 a great new white-way street lighting system throughout the business district was authorized, which resulted in seventy-two modern mercury vapor lamps replacing 118 outmoded lamps and poles.⁵⁷

Postmaster Frank Chappell revealed that total postal receipts in 1955 amounted to \$114,235.11, which was about five per cent more than in the previous year.⁵⁸ The largest volume of sales in its history was reported by the Sumter Livestock Association, Inc. when Manager Fred Kight announced total receipts of \$3,274,626.73.⁵⁹

The Americus Fire Department, under the leadership of Chief H. K. Henderson, received national recognition from the National Fire Prevention Association when it was named first-place winner in Georgia because of its outstanding safety program in 1955.⁶⁰

The city's mayors since the administration of H. O. Jones had been Fred P. Bowen and J. E. Logan, the latter assuming office on January 1, 1955.⁶¹

In his annual report on the city's financial condition, Mayor Logan noted that the City of Americus began the year 1956 with assets and liabilities of \$3,310,364.02. Annual expenses and revenues were reported at \$490,843.03. The largest item of general revenue, \$88,375.50, was obtained from the issuance of licenses, but the Water Department reported net sales amounting to \$140,105.28. The greatest expense borne by the city was \$80,383.86 for the street department.⁶²

As a slow but steady stream of new residents and new business enterprises settled in Americus, the Chamber of Commerce added to its ever-expanding program a campaign to "sell" the home folk on the importance of boosting the city and county. A public relations committee was formed with Frank Myers as chairman. Other members were Fred Bowen, James R. Blair, James W. Lott, Dr. Lloyd Moll, Charles Smith, H. K. Underkofler, Herbert Moon, Pete Phyne and Jack Moses, the latter of whom was currently serving as the chamber's president.⁶³

In 1956 the General Assembly authorized the creation of a six-man commission to prepare a master plan for development of the city and county. It also authorized Americus to advertise and promote the agricultural, industrial, historic, recreational and natural resources of Georgia.⁶⁴

An independent corporation, but one designed to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce in its efforts to secure new industries, was organized under the name of Americus and Sumter County Development Corporation. The incorporators, Jack Moses, Randolph Jones and T. D. Warren,

announced that the corporation was authorized 2,500 shares of stock to be sold for one dollar each. Each shareholder would be required to purchase a \$100 bond or debenture for each share of stock when requested to do so by the board of directors. 65

There was considerable agitation for a new courthouse and jail to replace the antiquated structures that had been in use since the 1890s. 66 New quarters for county officials, superior court, and the jail would be an improvement in both the amount of space available for official purposes and in the appearance of the business district. As 1956 ended, Sumter Countians were making plans for the erection of an ultra-modern courthouse on the site of Colonel George M. Dudley's ante-bellum house. This tract of land, bounded by Spring, Dudley and Lamar streets and the Central of Georgia's tracks, afforded sufficient space for a large one-story building and for lawns and parking areas. All of Americus was pleased at this evidence of progress, but many long-time residents hoped the familiar clock tower on the old courthouse would be retained as a memorial to the city's pioneer citizens.

Completion of an annex to the Americus High School Building on Harrold Avenue would permit the senior and junior high schools to be re-united in 1957. The old junior high school building in Rees Park would then be used as an elementary school, supplementing over-crowded Furlow Grammar School. 67

The financial statements of Americus banks were indicative of the new growth and prosperity of Americus and Sumter County.

On December 31, 1955, the Bank of Commerce had cash and liabilities of \$5,788.778.19. 68 Officers of the institution were Charles F. Crisp, president; Henry Collier, vice president, and H. P. Anderson, vice president and cashier.

Directors were Messrs. Crisp and Collier, Frank Sheffield, Jr., John West Sheffield and Charles R. Crisp. 69

The Citizens Bank of Americus reported resources and liabilities of \$4,200,243.65. 70 Evan Mathis was president, and Samuel Hunter was vice president. Directors were the officers and Wingate Dykes, T. O. Marshall, Jr. and Dr. H. A. Smith.

The First Federal Savings and Loan Association had assets and liabilities of \$2,234,924.89. 71 Its president was James Hixon Hawkins, grandson of Judge James A. Hixon and of Eugene A. Hawkins.

DEATH OF A CENTENARIAN

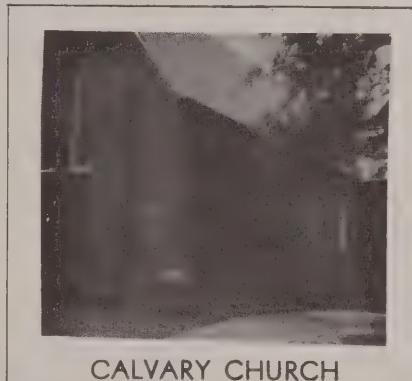
Americus lost its oldest and one of its best known residents on October 17, 1954, when death claimed Mrs. Florence Davenport Hollis, widow

of Benjamin P. Hollis. The venerable lady died at the phenomenal age of 105 years, three months and twenty days, 72 thus becoming the oldest person ever to die in Sumter County.

On the occasion of Mrs. Hollis' one hundredth birthday anniversary, June 27, 1949, Mayor Fred Bowen had issued a proclamation making that day Florence D. Hollis Day in Americus. A gala celebration was held at Mrs. Hollis' Taylor Street residence, which had been freshly painted for the occasion, and an evening reception was held at the Americus Country Club. For many years it had been a local custom for great numbers of Mrs. Hollis' friends to call upon her on her birthday. When she passed the century mark, however, her family reluctantly stated that only relatives and invited guests could be included in the day's activities. This was necessary because of the vast horde of relatives who descended upon Americus for the festivities. At that time Mrs. Hollis had six living children, fifteen grandchildren, thirty-six great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren. 73 Her nieces, nephews and cousins could be numbered in the hundreds.

Mrs. Hollis' family was noted for its longevity. Her father, Colonel Walter T. Davenport, died in 1910 at the age of ninety-two; 74 a sister, Mrs. Dupont Guerry of Macon, died in 1947 at the age of ninety-four; 75 a brother, Daniel Frederick Davenport, former Americus postmaster, died on September 13, 1952, at the age of ninety-two, 76 and another brother, the Reverend Thomas Edwin Davenport, superannuated Methodist minister, died on September 16, 1955, also at the age of ninety-two. 77

The Reverend James Bolan Lawrence, a retired rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, died on July 28, 1957, at his cottage on Saint Simon's Island. Funeral services were held at his beloved church, after which his body was interred



CALVARY CHURCH

in the churchyard at Saint James' Pennington, a rural mission whose existence was due entirely to his devoted services over a period of many years.
78

Few men in the history of Americus have been so widely loved as was "Mister Lawrence." Devoted to his Master and to the needs of his parish, he nonetheless found time in the course of a busy lifetime to participate actively in nearly every phase of community life. He was a good citizen to the very end: his will revealed that he had bequeathed small sums of money to the governments of the city, the county, the state and the nation in which he lived and labored so long. In recognition of his distinguished services as a clergyman, the University of Georgia had awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1928. 79

"Only a great man with a devout singleness of purpose can live a simple life. Jimmy Lawrence collected these attributes as easily as you and I avoid them. His worldly ambitions were harnessed by an unwavering effort to reach that spiritual goal so clear to him and so dim to most of us.... A lesser man would have been exceedingly proud of his erudition, for he was truly a scholar. A lesser man would have been intolerant of the ignorance and sham he had to condone in his dogged journey toward the unity he adored. A lesser man would not have been Jimmy Lawrence...." 80

John Edgar Dawson Shipp, ninety-two year old attorney, historian, scholar, civic leader, farmer and former legislator, died on November 29, 1950. 81 He was the father of Ethel (Mrs. Roy Sheffield Bell), Freddie (Mrs. Lucius McCleskey), Brooks, Hawkins and Edgar Shipp, Jr., all of whom were born of his first marriage. His second wife, who survived, was the former Miss Katherine Kerr of Virginia. Mr. Shipp was widely known for his magnificent collection of more than thirty thousand books, said to be the largest private collection in the South.

"It is doubtful if any man in Georgia - not even the late W. J. DeRenne of Wormsloe - has done more to preserve the state's literature than.... has Mr. Shipp. His is not only the largest private library in the state, but unquestionably the best, if we except Mr. DeRenne's.... If a fire should doom this library to destruction, it would mean the loss of books which even the Library of Congress could not match." 82

Frank Probasco Harrold, owner of Harrold Brothers cotton warehouse and long a prominent citizen of Americus, died on July 17, 1953, at the age of seventy-eight years. He was an alumnus of the University of the South and had served as senior warden of Calvary Episcopal Church for forty years. 83

"Few men who have ever lived in our community have ever gained such sincere respect and warm devotion that all had for him; a gentleman of the old school, a man of complete integrity, a Christian in faith and character.... Steadfast in life, and faithful unto death." 84

Carr Sullivan Glover, seventy-six year old president of Glover Grocery Company, died in 1952, 85 and was succeeded in office by his son-in-law, William A. Dodson, Jr. A member of one of Americus' leading families, Mr. Glover was a son of George W. Glover and his first wife, the former Miss Mary Sullivan. He was a brother of Lillie (Mrs. I. B. Small), Genie (Mrs. Jack Massee), Ruth (Mrs. Shelton Harris), Georgia (Mrs. J. H. Lumpkin) and Walter Glover. He was a half-brother of Carobel and Harry Glover, whose mother was the former Miss Eugenia West of Americus. Carr Glover was twice married. His first wife was Miss Berta Crisp, daughter of Charles F. Crisp. Their children were Clara (Mrs. B. F. Easterlin, Jr.), Mary (Mrs. W. A. Dodson, Jr.), Charles and Carr Glover, Jr. 86 Some years after Mrs. Glover's death, Mr. Glover married Miss Lula B. Williams of Macon, Mississippi, who survived him. She later became the wife of Orman Kay of Birmingham, Alabama.

Hollis Fort, a prominent Americus attorney and one-time candidate for Congress, died on June 26, 1956, at the age of seventy-one years. A son of Judge Allen Fort, he was an alumnus of the University of Georgia and a member of the First Baptist Church and of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity. In the course of a long and useful career he had served as secretary to Congressman Dudley Hughes, as city recorder and city attorney, as a member of the Georgia Legislature, and as solicitor-general of the Southwestern Judicial Circuit. Mr. Fort was survived by his widow, the former Miss Nellie Niles, and three children: Florence (Mrs. James C. Collins), James H. and Hollis Fort, Jr. 87

John Sheffield, kindly and respected hardware dealer and civic leader, died on January 20, 1946, at the age of seventy-five years.88 He was a prominent member of the First Methodist Church and once served as district governor of the Rotary club. He and his wife, the former Miss Mary Hawkins, were the parents of Elizabeth (Mrs. Charles Lanier), Mary (Mrs. Sheffield Shayne; formerly Mrs. Rudolph Wright), Helen (Mrs. W. D. Morgan, Jr.), and John West Sheffield.

Timothy Furlow Gatewood, a grandson of Colonel T. M. Furlow and for many years operator of an Elm Avenue cotton gin, died in 1949, as did his son, Furlow Gatewood, Jr., local realtor. The elder Mr. Gatewood's widow, the former Miss Cordelia Hawkins, died in 1950. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gatewood had been prominently identified with affairs pertaining to the First Baptist Church. In addition to the son already named, they were the parents of Cordelia (Mrs. Alton Cogdell), Agnes (Mrs. Theron Jennings), Gladys (Mrs. E. W. Waldemayer), Hal, Thomas, William, Samuel and A. D. Gatewood, "Jr." (2nd). Furlow Gatewood, Jr., and his wife, the former Miss Flora Denham, were the parents of Flora (Mrs. H. K. Undercofler), James and Furlow Gatewood, 3rd. A brother of the senior Mr. Gatewood, Ainsworth Dudley Gatewood, died in 1946. He and his wife, the former Miss Ora Perry, were the parents of Ira (Mrs. James Dudley), and Ainsworth D. Gatewood, (Jr.). 89

With the exception of the Reverend James B. Lawrence, all of the persons whose deaths are recorded in the foregoing paragraphs were buried in Oak Grove Cemetery. This hallowed spot, planned originally as a beautiful resting place for Americus' departed citizens, had deteriorated to such an extent by 1956 that it was a source of embarrassment to local residents. The fence surrounding the property had been removed, old trees had been felled and no replacements made, quaint old iron fences had been permitted to collapse and disappear, broken markers were removed instead of being repaired, and weeds took over the plots of families long since gone from Americus. As newer sections were opened no effort was made to plant trees and, consequently, the naked red earth was an affront to the eyes of visitors and a stark reminder of death to the newly-bereaved.

EPILOGUE

In the years since Americus observed its one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary in 1956, changes have continued to be made in the appearance of the city and in the lives of its residents.

Several striking architectural changes have been made, the most notable being the addition of an ultra-modern courthouse on the old Dudley property at Lamar, Spring and Dudley streets. Constructed at a cost of \$700,000, the handsome one-story facility was dedicated on May 21, 1959. The Honorable Bond Almond, associate justice of the State Supreme Court, was principal speaker at the dedicatory service. He was introduced by T. O. Marshall, Jr., president of the Americus Bar Association. Among other participants in the ceremony were George L. Mathews, chairman of the Sumter County Board of Commissioners, and Mayor Fred P. Bowen, the latter of whom had been returned to office after a lapse of several years.

The ornate red-brick structure at the southeast corner of Lee and Forsyth streets which had served as Sumter's courthouse for seventy-two years, was demolished early in 1960. Despite the efforts of a small group of citizens to preserve the famous old clock tower on the building, progress prevailed and the site was cleared for commercial purposes.

A beautiful new sanctuary for the First Baptist Church was dedicated on May 15, 1959, with the Reverend C. L. Leopard, D. D., pastor, preaching the dedicatory sermon. Constructed at a cost of \$310,000, the Georgian-style structure has a seating capacity of 900 and is completely air-conditioned. It was erected across Lee Street from the earlier sanctuary, and was built on the site of two distinctive residences which had long been Americus landmarks. One of these was the elegant brick house built by G. W. Glover and occupied later by Charles M. Council; the other was a two-story frame house in which Mr. Glover had previously lived and which in more recent years had been owned by Mrs. C. C. Williams. The house to the north of the new church, a handsome Greek Revival edifice known for years as the Johnson Apartments, was presented to the Church by Milton Mize for use as offices. This house was built in the 'Eighties by Mrs. Daniel W. Bagley as a gift to his wife, who soon sold it to her father, Henry R. Johnson, as the last of his several residences in the city. It adjoins to the north the house formerly owned by R. J. Perry, which now is occupied by his daughter, Mrs. A. D. Gatewood.

A long-time Forsyth Street landmark was gone early in 1960 when the Bank of Commerce completed an extensive modernization of its plant. The structure which the bank occupies was built by Johnson & Harrold in 1891, and for several years the local post office was housed in it. The Bank of Commerce, in its modernization program, removed the original third floor and replaced the imposing granite facade with an attractive brick front. The wing of the old Allen House, located next to the bank on the northeast corner of Forsyth Street and Cotton Avenue, was demolished and a parking lot and a window for drive-in banking substituted in its place.

The Citizens Bank of Americus had added a drive-in banking window in 1959 in an effort to serving its expanding clientele. A major executive change was necessitated in the following year by the sudden death of the bank's president, Evan Mathis. He was succeeded in the top position by Samuel Hunter, formerly vice president of the institution.

Construction of a new plant for the Americus Times-Recorder, begun in 1958, enabled the newspaper to move from the brick building on Windsor Avenue which it had occupied for many years. The new building was erected on Forsyth Street, almost due north of the old Thornton Wheatley and J. W. Sheffield residences on Lamar Street. The latter house, which after Mr. Sheffield's time was occupied successively by Captain A. A. Adams and his daughter Mrs. T. H. McGillis, was demolished in 1958.

A new \$55,000 bridge on Spring Street was opened in 1959 to replace the narrow old bridge which had spanned Muckalee Creek for many years. Since the opening of the Forsyth Street bridge over the railroad tracks two decades earlier, Spring Street was no longer the only route to the Albany and Plains roads, but it remained an important avenue for the commercial plants located to the south of the courthouse.

Plans for development of a splendid new East-West highway through the heart of the business district were announced in 1960. The project would route U. S. Highway 280 into the city across a new bridge over the Central of Georgia's tracks, thence along Lamar Street to Prince Street. At the latter point a new right-of-way would be obtained so that the highway could be extended to the northwest corner of Oak Grove Cemetery, and thence to a junction with Forsyth Street in the vicinity of the former East Americus School. City, county and state officials recommended that Lamar Street be made one-way in an easterly direction and that Forsyth Street be made one-way in a westerly direction in an effort to expedite the increased volume of traffic anticipated for the new highway.

Establishment of a home for aged persons was announced late in 1959 by the South Georgia Methodist Conference. The church group had accepted an offer of 392 acres of land on Lee Street Road, located a short distance south of the Elm Avenue intersection, which had been offered by the Rock of Ages Homes, Incorporated, of Americus. The latter organization was created as a result of a bequest of the late Mrs. Kate Witte, who desired that her residence and the surrounding property be used as a home for the aging.

The astonishing economic progress which Americus experienced in the decade 1950-1960 appeared to be a permanent and accelerating condition. The Chamber of Commerce lost, temporarily at least, its dynamic manager, J. P. Luther, when he received an interim appointment to succeed the late S. R. Heys as clerk of Sumter Superior Court. In an election a few months later, however, oil distributor Ely Horne won the clerkship on a permanent basis, so it was considered likely that Mr. Luther would return to his former job with the chamber.

A young and energetic association of local promoters, the Americus and Sumter County Development Corporation, headed into the second quarter of 1960 with ambitious plans for further industrial development of the city and county. Newly-elected officers of the corporation were Thomas D. Warren, president; Charles Crisp, vice president; Thomas O. Marshall Jr., secretary; and Robert Perry, treasurer. Mr. Warren succeeded Philip Jones, who had headed the organization since its inception.

The segregation-versus-integration problem which had faced local officials late in the 'fifties was still very much with them as 1960 began. In the face of almost certain enforcement of the Supreme Court decision that involuntary segregation in public schools was illegal, Governor Ernest Vandiver of Georgia created a fact-finding commission to visit cities throughout the state in an effort to determine the will of the people. The first public hearing of the group got underway at Americus on March 3, 1960. Sumter, one of twenty-four South Georgia counties involved in the hearing, was officially represented by W. C. Mundy, superintendent of Americus schools; Charles F. Crisp, banker and civic leader; Mrs. Louise Hines, spokesman for some 800 employees of the Manhattan Shirt Company; George L. Mathews, chairman of the county commissioners, and Marvin McNeill, farmer and businessman. They, and forty-two of the other fifty-one persons who testified, said substantially the same thing: Segregation at all costs! Whether the cost would be dear in money, literacy, friendships, and even lives, could only be estimated. It was a grave situation which would demand coolness, courage and -- almost certainly -- some measure of compromise if disaster were to be averted.

Americus lost one of its finest citizens on March 23, 1960, when death claimed Evan T. Mathis, sixty-three year old president of the Citizens Bank of Americus. A son of Dr. E. T. Mathis and his second wife, the former Miss Jessie Lane, he was a native of Americus and an honor graduate of Georgia Tech. Following service as a first lieutenant with the American Expeditionary Force in France in World War I, he returned to Americus and began his career as a bookkeeper. A jovial and kindly man with an ever-present supply of wit, Mr. Mathis was an active participant in civic and religious affairs, serving variously as a member of city council, secretary and treasurer of the Americus and Sumter County Hospital Authority, president of the Americus Kiwanis Club and lieutenant governor of the Georgia District of Kiwanis International, and chairman of the Board of Stewards of the First Methodist Church. His wife was the former Miss Lois McMath, daughter of Robert Lee McMath and niece of Samuel R. Heys. They were the parents of Lois (Mrs. Walter C. Kress), Lane and Evan T. Mathis, Jr.

Among other outstanding citizens who died in the years immediately following 1956 were:

Judge Robert Lee Maynard, former judge of Sumter Superior Court and former state legislator, who died on July 8, 1957, at the age of 90; William Washington Dykes, attorney and former legislator, who died on his eighty-first birthday, August 8, 1957; Idus Brown Small, for forty-six

years Sumter County tax collector, who died at the age of 85, only eight days after the death of his second wife, the former Miss Lillian Glover, who died on March 25, 1958; Mrs. Allene Walker Harrold, widow of Frank P. Harrold and long active in patriotic, religious and social circles, who died April 6, 1958, at the age of 78; Dr. Stephen Henry McKee, beloved citizen and former president of the Georgia Dental Society, who died on December 20, 1958, at the age of 90; The Reverend William Alexander Joyner, eighty year old merchant and minister, who died on January 26, 1959; Paul E. Westbrook, long-time local telephone company manager, who died on April 15, 1959, at the age of 76; Lee Mashburn Hansford, merchant, pecan grower, active civic and church worker, who died on May 29, 1959, at the age of 88; seventy-nine year old Samuel Robert Heys, who had spent fifty-four years as deputy clerk and clerk of courts in Sumter County, whose death on November 26, 1959, ended a notable career of public service, civic work and church activities; Miss Sarah Pope Cobb, beloved former principal of Furlow Grammar School, who died at 89, on December 1, 1959; and George Octavius Marshall, seventy-six year old native of North Carolina, prominently identified with agriculture in Sumter County as county agent and as a seed merchant, and formerly chairman of the Americus Board of Education, who died on February 16, 1960.

When Americus celebrated its Centennial in 1931, the Americus Times-Recorder said in a front page editorial:

".... There is no future for the community that does not honor its past.... To have the incentive to go forward it is necessary to know what lies behind. Out of the past the present has come; and out of the present the future will arise.

"Americus and Sumter county have done well to pause at this Century milestone and study the past. Let the history be written. Let the relics be preserved. Let the children know about the great men that have lived here; let them know who builded their city and their county, and let them feel the responsibility of transmitting the high traditions.

"Let it be resolved as an outgrowth of this Centennial that the community - the community of city and county - will prepare a place - a hall, an annex, an adjunct, or some addition to a library building or a school building, or the courthouse, that shall contain and keep for the inspection of the present generation, and for the delight and inspiration of future generations, the memorials and the legends...."

After twenty-nine years, the newspaper's admirable suggestions are becoming a reality. There is now a written history of the city's birth and growth. Additionally, there is a new organization which has the potential to become a great asset to Americus and to the entire state. This is the Sumter Arts and Historical Association, which was chartered by Judge Cleveland Rees of Sumter Superior Court on February 18, 1960. Its purposes, as stated in the application for incorporation, are to establish and maintain a museum of arts, crafts and historical objects and to pro-

mote educational and historical activities in Sumter County. Officers of the organization are Charles R. Crisp, president; Ed Hutchinson and Mrs. John Morgan, vice presidents; Mrs. Hollis Fort, Jr., and Mrs. Willard Riley, secretaries, and Kernwood Brown, treasurer.

A detailed account of Americus in the years since it entered the second quarter of its second century must await the pen of a future historian. The person who assumes that task will have a worthy responsibility, for the future of Americus promises to surpass anything the "Garden Spot of Dixie" has known to date. Let the historian of the future - and all future citizens - pay homage to the outstanding men and women who guided the city's development from the early days when it was Indian territory up to the present time. All that is past is finished, but it is the prelude to the future.

Citizens of Americus in the past and in the future, we of the present salute you!

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CHAPTER VI (1877 - 1882)

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11. Ibid., July 11, 1879.
12. Ibid., Jan. 10, 1879.
13. Joseph Derry, GEORGIA - ITS CITIES, SCENERY AND RESOURCES (Philadelphia: 1878), p. 104.
14. Minnie C. Hinton, "Americus As I Knew It Fifty-Four Years Ago," AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN, Aug. 15, 1879.
19. Ruby F. R. Thomas, HISTORIC SPOTS AND PLACES OF INTEREST IN GEORGIA (Atlanta: 1935), p. 116. (The author was a granddaughter of Capt. C. W. Felder, of Americus.)
20. Hinton, "Americus As I Knew It Fifty-Four Years Ago."
21. J. E. Mathis in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Dorothy Orr, A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN GEORGIA (Chapel Hill: 1950), p. 243.
25. THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN, Aug. 29, 1879.

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26. James B. Lawrence, *A HISTORY OF CALVARY CHURCH, AMERICUS, GEORGIA 1858-1912* (Atlanta: 1912), p. 178.
 27. Cornerstone of present structure at the same location.
 28. Official journal of the convention.
 29. *GEORGIA STATE GAZETTEER 1879-80* (Atlanta: 1879), pp. 13, 15, 28.
 30. Walter G. Cooper, *THE STORY OF GEORGIA* (New York: 1938), III, 276.
 31. William J. Northen, *MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA* (Atlanta: 1912), III, 173.
 32. S. Walter Martin, "Charles F. Crisp, Speaker of the House," *THE GEORGIA REVIEW*, VII, 2 (1954), 167-177.
 33. Northen, *MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA*, III, 298.
 34. Ruth Blair, *GEORGIA'S OFFICIAL REGISTER* (Atlanta: 1927), p. 100.
 35. D. F. Davenport in the *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931.
 36. Nettie Powell, *HISTORY OF MARION COUNTY* (Columbus: 1931), p. 80.
 37. *AMERICUS RECORDER*, June, 25, 1882.
 38. Ibid.
 39. *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, Sept. 21, 1883.
 40. *THE SEMI-WEEKLY REPUBLICAN*, Aug. 26, 1882.
 41. The Confederate Southern Memorial Association, *HISTORY OF THE CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE SOUTH* (New Orleans: 1904), pp. 87-88.
 42. *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, Apr. 25, 1879.
 43. Ibid., Sept. 24, 1880.
 44. Ibid., Dec. 17, 1880.
 45. Ibid., Oct. 21, 1880.
 46. Ibid., Oct. 8, 1880.
 47. Northen, *MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA*, III, 400-411.
 48. Ibid.; *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, Nov. 26, 1880.
 49. Northen, *MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA*, III, 400-411; *THE MACON TELEGRAPH*, Nov. 30, 1891.
 50. Ibid.
 51. Ibid.
 52. Lucian Lamar Knight, *A STANDARD HISTORY OF GEORGIA AND GEORGIANS* (New York: 1917), VI, 3298; Powell, *HISTORY OF MARION COUNTY*, p. 43.
 53. Helen Eliza Terrell and Sarah Robertson Dixon, *HISTORY OF STEWART COUNTY* (Columbus: 1958), I, 566, 734; William Bailey Williford, "Williford and Allied Families," an unpublished manuscript in possession of the author.
 54. The Southern Historical Society, *MEMOIRS OF GEORGIA* (Atlanta: 1895), II, 847.
 55. *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, Jan. 31, Oct. 24, Oct. 31, 1879.
 56. Ibid., Sept. 22, 1882.
 57. Ibid., Oct. 5, 1880.
 58. Ibid., Dec. 26, 1879.
 59. Ibid., Oct. 29, 1882.
 60. Ibid., Jan. 10, 1879.
 61. Ibid., Sept. 4, 1879.
 62. Ibid., May 7, 1880.
 63. Ibid., Apr. 16, 1879.
 64. Ibid., Feb. 14 and Aug. 1, 1879.
 65. Ibid., July 18, 1879.
 66. Ibid., Dec. 21, 1882.
 67. Ibid., June 6, 1879.
 68. Ibid., Dec. 8, 1882.
 69. Ibid.
 70. Ibid.
 71. Ibid., Jan. 10, 1879; Tombstone, Oak Grove Cemetery.
 72. Tombstone, Oak Grove Cemetery.
 73. Sumter County Marriage Records: Book I, 1833-38 (Available at Sumter County Courthouse).
 74. *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, Jan. 10, 1879.
 75. Quoted in *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, Mar. 12, 1880.
 76. *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, Jan. 18, 1878.
 77. Ibid., June 6, 1879.
 78. Ibid., Jan. 9, Feb. 20, 1880, and Jan. 11, 1878.

CHAPTER VII (1883 - 1893)

1. *THE MACON TELEGRAPH*, Nov. 30, 1891.
 2. *GEORGIA CODE* 1882, Sect. 1689, p. 373.
 3. Letter to the author from W. E. Rachels of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Co., dated Nov. 7, 1952.
 4. Daisy O. Mallard and Virginia M. Culpepper, "Americus," *THE GEORGIA REVIEW*, IV, 2 (1950), 119.
 5. Mrs. J. C. Logan in the *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931, quoting a paper written by Henry Williams.
 6. Ibid.; Mallard and Culpepper, "Americus," p. 118.
 7. *THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN*, Apr. 13, July 20, 1883.
 8. William Harden, *A HISTORY OF SAVANNAH AND SOUTH GEORGIA* (Chicago: 1913), II, 995-997; Mrs. Bryan Wells Collier, *BIOGRAPHIES OF REPRESENTATIVE WOMEN OF THE SOUTH*, 1861-1923 (Published privately), II, 269.
 9. *THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN*, July 27, 1883.
 10. *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931.
 11. Charles A. Fricker, "Americus In Her Medieval Days," *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Ibid.
 14. Ibid.
 15. Recollection of William F. Bailey, of Macon, formerly of Americus, as told to the author in 1954.
 16. *THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN*, May 18, 1883.
 17. *THE MACON TELEGRAPH*, Aug. 23, 1893.
 18. Ibid., May 18, 1883.
 19. *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931, citing report of W. A. Wilson.
 20. J. E. Mathis in the *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931.
 21. D. F. Davenport in the *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931.
 22. *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931; *THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN*, Apr. 13, 1883.
 23. *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931; Plaque on church building.
 24. James B. Lawrence, *HISTORY OF CALVARY CHURCH, AMERICUS, GEORGIA, 1858-1912* (Atlanta: 1912), pp. 178-179.
 25. *AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER*, Dec. 8, 1931.
 26. F. A. Battey, ed., *BIOGRAPHICAL SOUVENIR OF GEORGIA AND FLORIDA* (Chicago: 1889), p. 35.
 27. Ibid.
 28. Ibid.; Allen D. Candler and Clement A. Evans, *CYCLOPEDIA OF GEORGIA* (Atlanta: 1906), I, 105.

29. Harden, A HISTORY OF SAVANNAH AND SOUTH GEORGIA, II, 1037.
30. Department of Agriculture, GEORGIA HISTORICAL AND INDUSTRIAL (Atlanta: 1901), p. 917.
31. GEORGIA LAWS, 1890-91, pp. 35, 396.
32. Department of Agriculture, GEORGIA, p. 916.
33. LAWS OF GEORGIA (1886), p. 180, No. 100, and (1887) p. 328, No. 366; W. P. Burt in THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Nov. 30, 1891; Letter to the author from W. E. Rachels of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Co., dated Nov. 7, 1952.
34. LAWS OF GEORGIA (1888) p. 170, No. 117; LAWS OF ALABAMA, 1888-1889, p. 342, No. 251; LAWS OF GEORGIA (1889) p. 741, No. 815, and (1890-1891) p. 253, No. 57.
35. Tom W. Loyless in THE MACON TELEGRAPH, May 10, 1893.
36. It has sometimes been said that the town was named for his daughter of the same name (later Mrs. T. F. Gatewood), but J. E. D. Shipp, one of the founders and first residents of Cordele, stated consistently that it was named for Mrs. Hawkins. See his biography of Col. Hawkins in William J. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA (Atlanta: 1912), III, 400-411, and an article in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER of Oct. 7, 1938, which quotes excerpts from a speech made by Mr. Shipp before the Americus Rotary Club on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Cordele.
37. Tom W. Loyless in THE MACON TELEGRAPH, May 10, 1893.
38. Ibid.; Lucian Lamar Knight, GEORGIA'S LANDMARKS, MEMORIALS AND LEGENDS (Atlanta: 1914), I, 499-501; AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Oct. 7, 1938.
39. Mallard and Culpepper, "Americus," THE GEORGIA REVIEW, p. 119.
40. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
41. Mrs. F. H. Scarborough in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
42. Nettie Powell, HISTORY OF MARION COUNTY (Columbus: 1931), p. 88.
43. THE TWI-WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, May 13, 1888.
44. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND STATE BANK EXAMINER, 1915 (Atlanta: 1915), p. 93.
45. Central Railroad of Georgia, FRUITS OF INDUSTRY (1895), a pamphlet.
46. A. E. Sholes, GEORGIA STATE GAZETTEER, 1888-89 (Atlanta: 1888), p. 258.
47. Ibid.
48. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND STATE BANK EXAMINER, 1915, p. 93.
49. Ibid.; THE ATLANTA JOURNAL, Apr. 6, 1940.
50. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND STATE BANK EXAMINER, 1915, p. 93.
51. Ibid.
52. A. E. Sholes, GEORGIA STATE GAZETTEER 1879-80 (Atlanta: 1879), p. 282; Advertisement in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
53. THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, Dec. 14, 1883.
54. THE MACON NEWS, Nov. 25, 1947; William Bailey Williford, "Williford and Allied Families," an unpublished manuscript in possession of the author.
55. Battey, BIOGRAPHICAL SOUVENIR, p. 97.
56. Lucian Lamar Knight, GEORGIA'S BI-CENTENNIAL MEMOIRS AND MEMORIES (Atlanta: 1931), IV, 324-326; Robert Paul Turbeville, EMINENT GEORGIANS (Decatur: 1937), I, 559-561.
57. Ruth Blair, GEORGIA'S OFFICIAL REGISTER, 1927 (Atlanta: 1927), p. 100; Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, IV.
58. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Dec. 22, 1892.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., Jan. 1 and 4, 1893.
61. Ibid., Jan. 14, Mar. 12 and June 13, 1893. Information concerning Dr. Hinkle's suicide and his son's residence in Macon was received from William F. Bailey on Dec. 2, 1957.
62. The author was so informed by the late Dr. S. H. McKee on June 25, 1955.
63. Walter G. Cooper, THE STORY OF GEORGIA (New York: 1938), Viog. Vol., p. 540.
64. The Southern Historical Society, MEMOIRS OF GEORGIA (Atlanta: 1895), II, 848.
65. Letter from P. E. Westbrook, Southern Bell manager at Americus, to E. A. Clement, district manager at Valdosta, dated May 24, 1940 (on file at the company's archives in Atlanta).
66. Mallard and Culpepper, "Americus," THE GEORGIA REVIEW, p. 119.
67. Ibid.
68. Information furnished by William F. Bailey, of Macon, Sept. 27, 1952.
69. Data copied from cornerstone, July 25, 1955.
70. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Oct. 9, 1891.
71. Data copied from cornerstone, July 8, 1954.
72. Mallard and Culpepper, "Americus," THE GEORGIA REVIEW, p. 120.
73. Fricker, "Americus In Her Medieval Days," AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
74. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931; THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN, Sept. 29, 1880.
75. AMERICUS RECORDER, Oct. 29, 1890.
76. Young & Co., BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY (Atlanta: 1890), pp. 15-23.
77. THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, Jan. 20, 1882.
78. Mallard and Culpepper, "Americus," THE GEORGIA REVIEW, p. 120.
79. Dates copied from facades of respective buildings, July 8, 1954.
80. According to City Marshal Zera A. Littlejohn, Jr., in a conversation with the author on June 25, 1955.
81. THE AMERICUS DAILY TIMES, Nov. 22, 1890.
82. Data copied from facade of building, July 8, 1954.
83. According to William F. Bailey in a conversation with the author on September 19, 1954.
84. E. H. Hinton, "A Historical Sketch of The Evaluation of Trade and Transportation at Columbus, Ga." (1912) (manuscript available at Atlanta Public Library).
85. AMERICUS RECORDER, July 10, 1889.
86. Letter to the author from W. E. Rachels of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Co., dated Nov. 7, 1952.
87. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Nov. 12, 1891.
88. Ibid., Nov. 13, 1891.
89. Ibid., Nov. 14, 1891.
90. Ibid., Nov. 15, 1891.
91. Ibid., Dec. 18, 1891.
92. Letter from W. E. Rachels.
93. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Apr. 22, 1892.
94. Ibid.
95. Winifred Gregory, AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS 1821-1936 (New York: 1937), p. 100.
96. THE MACON DAILY TELEGRAPH, Sept. 2, 1887.
97. Gregory, AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS, p. 100; Shelby Myrick, of Savannah, in a conversation with the author on Jan. 22, 1960; Tombstone and mausoleum at Oak Grove Cemetery.
98. Thomas Gamble, "Savannah Historical Sketches," Vol. I (manuscript available at the Savannah Public Library).
99. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Dec. 8-9, 1891.
100. Quoted in THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Dec. 11, 1891.
101. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Mar. 16 and May 10, 1893.
102. Ibid., May 16, 1893.
103. Ibid., Nov. 7, 1892.

104. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Nov. 24, 1892.
 105. Ibid.
 106. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, III, 298.
 107. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, May 31, 1893.
 108. Raymond B. Nixon, HENRY W. GRADY, SPOKESMAN OF THE NEW SOUTH (New York: 1943), pp. 314, 329-330.
 109. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Oct. 20, 1891.
 110. Ibid., Apr. 19, 1893.
 111. Ibid., Jan. 23, 1893.
 112. THE SEMI-WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, Sept. 15, 1886.
 113. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Feb. 8, 1893.
 114. THE WEEKLY SUMTER REPUBLICAN, Jan. 31, 1879.
 115. Deed Books V, p. 552, and X, p. 372 (available at office of Clerk of Court, Sumter County Courthouse).
 116. According to the late Mrs. W. D. Bailey in a conversation with the author on Feb. 15, 1946.
 117. Minnie C. Hinton, "Americus As I Knew It Fifty-Four Years Ago," AMERICUS TIMES-RECORDER, Dec. 8, 1931.
 118. According to Mrs. John Sheffield in a conversation with the author on June 25, 1955.
 119. File Index and Index To Mortgage - Grantee - A-D, p. 7 (available in office of Clerk of Court, Sumter County Courthouse).
 120. According to the late Miss Sarah P. Cobb in a conversation with the author on July 8, 1954.
 121. Filing Docket and Index To Mortgage - Grantee - N-Z, p. 55, and Deed Book T, p. 731 (available in office of Clerk of Court in Sumter County Courthouse).
 122. Deed Book I, p. 768 (available in office of Clerk of Court).
 123. Hinton, "Americus As I Knew It," AMERICUS TIMES-RECORDER, Dec. 8, 1931; According to Mrs. John Sheffield in a conversation with the author on June 25, 1955.
 124. THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, May 25, 1883.
 125. According to Mrs. John Sheffield in a conversation with the author on June 25, 1955.
 126. All other information in this section on houses that is not otherwise accredited was obtained by the author in various conversations with William F. Bailey between 1952 and 1955.
 127. THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, July 24, 1885.
 128. Ibid., Oct. 23, 1885.
 129. Arthur G. Powell, I CAN GO HOME AGAIN (Chapel Hill: 1943), pp. 268-274.
 130. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Nov. 28 and Dec. 9, 1892.
 131. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Dec. 1, 1892.
 132. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, III, 408.
 133. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Jan. 12, 1893.
 134. Ibid., Jan. 22, 1893.
 135. Ibid.
 136. Ibid., Mar. 15, 1893.
 137. Ibid., Apr. 29, May 14, 1893.
 138. Ibid., Jan. 29, 1893.
 139. Ibid., Dec. 22, 1892.
 140. Ibid., Jan. 6, 1893.
 141. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Feb. 19, 1893.
 142. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Mar. 12, 1893.
 143. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Feb. 19, 1893.
 144. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, May 30, 1893.
 145. Ibid., June 25, 1893.
 146. Ibid., July 10, 1893.
 147. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Mar. 12, 1893; THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, Apr. 25, 1879.
 148. Helen Eliza Terrell and Sarah Robertson Dixon, HISTORY OF STEWART COUNTY (Columbus: 1958), I, 376, 734; the late Mrs. W. D. Bailey and the late D. F. Davenport in conversations with the author in 1946 and 1950, respectively; Henry Wing, of Atlanta, in a conversation with the author in 1953.
 149. Deed Book Y, p. 372 (available in office of Clerk of Court, Sumter County Courthouse).
 150. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, III, 408.
 151. Deed Book HH, p. 290 (available in office of Clerk of Court).
 152. Letter to the author from Ray Tomlinson, deputy clerk of Clinch County Superior Court, dated at Homerville, Georgia, on May 14, 1955, reveals that Col. Hawkins purchased land on forty-seven different occasions prior to 1902.
 153. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Aug. 25, 1893.
 154. Ibid., Aug. 30, 1893.
 155. Obituary of Col. T. M. Furlow (apparently from the AMERICUS RECORDER of Dec. 3, 1890), a copy of which was made available to the author on Mar. 23, 1960 by Mrs. Joseph T. Heaton, of Marietta; Mrs. Frank Jones, of Macon, in a conversation with the author on Mar. 19, 1960; Tombstones, Oak Grove Cemetery.
 156. Obituary of Col. Furlow.
 157. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, VI, 173.
 158. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, May 13, 1893.
 159. Louise Frederick Hays, THE RUMPH AND FREDERICK FAMILIES (Atlanta: 1942), pp. 169-176.
 160. Extract from a privately printed tribute to her memory, a copy of which is owned by the author of the present work. See also Capt. John A. Barksdale, BARKSDALE FAMILY HISTORY AND GENEALOGY (Richmond: 1940), pp. 12-29, and Sarah Donelson Hubert, GENEALOGY OF PART OF BARKSDALE FAMILY (Atlanta: 1895; later revised).
 161. THE WEEKLY REPUBLICAN, May 4, 1883.
 162. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Dec. 11, 1891.
 163. Ibid., Oct. 26, 1891.

CHAPTER VIII (1894 - 1899)

1. According to William F. Bailey, of Macon, in a conversation with the author on Sept. 27, 1952.
2. Ibid.
3. Lucian Lamar Knight, A STANDARD HISTORY OF GEORGIA AND GEORGians (New York: 1917), VI, 3298-3299.
4. THE ATLANTA JOURNAL, Oct. 26, 1899.
5. Knight, A STANDARD HISTORY, VI, 3298-3299.
6. Allen D. Candler and Clement A. Evans, CYCLOPEDIA OF GEORGIA (Atlanta: 1906), IV, 130.
7. Ibid.
8. Ruth Blair, GEORGIA'S OFFICIAL REGISTER, 1927 (Atlanta: 1927), p. 140.
9. Ibid., p. 77; Clark Howell, HISTORY OF GEORGIA (Chicago: 1926), II, 282.
10. Lucian Lamar Knight, GEORGIA'S BI-CENTENNIAL MEMOIRS AND MEMORIES (Atlanta: 1931), I, 288.
11. Thomas W. Loyless, GEORGIA'S PUBLIC MEN (Atlanta: 1904), p. 160; S. Russell Bridges, of Atlanta, in a conversation with the author on May 21, 1954. (Mr. Bridges is a half-brother of the late Judge James A. Hixon and a brother of the late E. L. Bridges, both of Americus.)
12. Lucian Lamar Knight, REMINISCENCES OF FAMOUS GEORGians (Atlanta: 1908), II, 388-389.
13. Fifty-Fourth Congress, MEMORIAL ADDRESSES ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF CHARLES FREDERICK CRISP (Washington: 1897), p. 21.

14. Ibid., pp. 21, 48.
15. Ibid., pp. 150-151.
16. Ibid., pp. 112-113.
17. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Data copied from cornerstone, June 25, 1955.
21. Letter to the author from W. E. Rachels of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Co., dated Nov. 7, 1952.
22. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Dec. 2, 1952.
23. James B. Lawrence, HISTORY OF CALVARY CHURCH, AMERICUS, GEORGIA, 1858-1912 (Atlanta: 1912), p. 110.
24. State of Georgia, ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA YEAR ENDING SEPT. 30, 1894 (Atlanta: 1894), pp. 143, 146, 149, 151, 154.
25. William Harden, A HISTORY OF SAVANNAH AND SOUTH GEORGIA (Chicago and New York: 1913), II, 1037.
26. Mrs. H. J. Williams, HISTORY OF SCHLEY COUNTY (Atlanta: 1935), p. 12.
27. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
28. Ibid.
29. Department of Agriculture, GEORGIA, HISTORICAL AND INDUSTRIAL (Atlanta: 1901), p. 519; ALBANY WEEKLY HERALD, Apr. 20, 1895.
30. THE ATLANTA JOURNAL, July 23, 1898.
31. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, July 23, 1898.
32. The Confederate Southern Memorial Assn., HISTORY OF THE CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE SOUTH (New Orleans: 1904), pp. 87-88; Candler and Evans, CYCLOPEDIA OF GEORGIA, II, 615.
33. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Nov. 13, 1941.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Mrs. James Davenport in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
38. Ibid.
39. Muster In Roll Co. H., 3rd Regt., Ga. Inf., U. S. Vols.; also other records available at the State Department of Defense, Atlanta.
40. Walter G. Cooper, THE STORY OF GEORGIA (New York: 1938), Biog. Vol., p. 377. (1898)
41. THE MACON TELEGRAPH, Apr. 17, 1895. This was a "Special" dispatch from Americus.
42. William F. Bailey in a conversation with the author on Sept. 27, 1952; tombstone, Oak Grove Cemetery.
43. Mrs. Henry P. Everett, of Americus, and Mrs. John B. Felder, Jr., of Atlanta, in conversations with the author on Apr. 2, 1960; Tombstones, Oak Grove Cemetery. Mrs. Felder cited entries in the Bible record of Amanda E. M. Taylor, which is now owned by the former's husband.

CHAPTER IX (1900 - 1916)

1. Department of Agriculture, GEORGIA, HISTORICAL AND INDUSTRIAL (Atlanta: 1901), p. 828.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. W. J. Cash, THE MIND OF THE SOUTH (New York: 1941), p. 200.
5. Mrs. H. J. Williams, HISTORY OF SCHLEY COUNTY (Atlanta: 1935), p. 13.
6. Letter from U. B. Harrold to J. Epps Brown, June 6, 1902 (available in the Harrold Collection at Emory University Library).
7. Data obtained from the company's archives in Atlanta.
8. D. F. Davenport in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
9. A copy of this letter is in the Harrold Collection at Emory University Library.
10. D. F. Davenport in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
11. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
12. Data copied from cornerstone, June 25, 1955. Date of construction furnished by A. D. Gatewood, Jr.
13. C. F. Giddings in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
14. James B. Lawrence, HISTORY OF CALVARY CHURCH, AMERICUS, GEORGIA, 1858-1912 (Atlanta: 1912), p. 179.
15. THE LIFE AND WORK OF JAMES BOLAN LAWRENCE, D. D., a pamphlet prepared by the Vestry of Calvary Church, 1948.
16. Data copied by the author from a plaque in front of Library building, July 8, 1954.
17. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Oct. 10, 1958.
18. William J. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA (Atlanta: 1912), VI, 113.
19. According to Mr. Hawkins' daughter Mrs. John Sheffield, in a conversation with the author on June 25, 1955.
20. Walter G. Cooper, THE STORY OF GEORGIA (New York: 1938), Biog. Vol., p. 246.
21. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
22. According to Mrs. J. E. Mathis in a conversation with the author on July 8, 1954.
23. Ibid.
24. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931; Mrs. John McMamus (nee Josephine Bagley), of Atlanta, in a conversation with the author on Apr. 5, 1960. She cited her mother, the late Mrs. D. W. Bagley, as the source for the information about the brick-yard.
25. State of Georgia, ANNUAL REPORT OF CITY SCHOOLS - AMERICUS, GEORGIA, 1906-1907 (Americus: 1906), a pamphlet.
26. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
27. Ibid., Dec. 2, 1959.
28. Charles M. Hale in the AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
29. AMERICUS TIMES-RECODER, Dec. 8, 1931.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, V, 92; Albert F. Bellingrath, Jr., of Atlanta, in a conversation with the author on Apr. 14, 1960.
33. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, V, 92.
34. According to Mrs. Lee Council of New York City and Live Oak, Florida, formerly of Americus, in a conversation with the author on June 24, 1955.
35. According to Mrs. John Sheffield in a conversation with the author on June 25, 1955.
36. William Harden, A HISTORY OF SAVANNAH AND SOUTH GEORGIA (Chicago and New York: 1913), II, 1037.
37. State of Georgia, ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND STATE BANK EXAMINER, 1914 (Atlanta: 1914), p. 22.
38. Williams, HISTORY OF SCHLEY COUNTY, p. 12.
39. THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Mar. 3, 1916.
40. Harden, A HISTORY OF SAVANNAH AND SOUTH GEORGIA, II, 1037.
41. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND STATE BANK EXAMINER, 1914, p. 23.
42. Northen, MEN OF MARK IN GEORGIA, V, 329.
43. Ibid.
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* (Pictured, left to right: Mr. Bailey; Gertrude Jossey, Atlanta; Ethel Buck, Tifton; Charles Speer Ansley,
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E R R A T A

- Page vii, para. 4, line 8: "Ilah" for "Ilan."
- Page 21, para. 4, line 3: "southeast" for "southwest."
- Page 31, para. 4, line 11: "named" for "name."
- Page 36, para. 2, line 15: "Lane" for "Land."
- Page 42, para. 9, line 2: "thoughtlessly" for "thoughtlessly."
- Page 43, para. 9, line 1. "April 9" for "April 10."
- Page 53, para. 2, line 3: "northwest" for "northeast."
- Page 54, para. 3, line 2: "seventeen years, and later worked" for "seventeen years and worked."
- Page 70, para. 3, line 5: "Rylander" for "Ryland."
- Page 70, para. 6, line 4: delete.
- Page 73, para. 1, line 3: "grocery" for "grovery."
- Page 108, para. 1, line 2: "in 1882" for "882"
- Page 119, para. 2, line 6: "during" for "furing."
- Page 134, para. 5, and page 135, para. 1: add note "14."
- Page 147, para. 5, line 1: "rear" for "reat."
- Page 153, para. 2, line 5: "bureau" for "bereay."
- Page 170, para. 4, line 4: "Hutchinson" for "Hutchison."
- Page 174, para. 8, line 3: add to end, "of Americus."
- Page 175, para. 1, line 2: "at" for "of."
- Page 184, para. 4, line 5: "Daniel W. Bagley" for "Mrs. Daniel W. Bagley."

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